The following is an informational pamphlet prepared by Minnesota Prairie County Alliance Child and Family Services.

It is intended to provide basic information and guidelines for residents of Minnesota Prairie County Alliance.

Contact Us

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**Home Alone:**

How old is old enough?

A guideline for supervision of children
How old is old enough?

As a parent you often wonder at what age can your child be left unsupervised or can baby sit other children. There are some guidelines to consider before leaving your child unattended or allowing them to baby-sit other children.

Guidelines to Consider

- The age and maturity of your child
- The availability of parent, guardian or caretaker by phone or in person
- Child's awareness of how to react to an emergency situation which may include a fire, severe weather, injury to self or others, etc.
- The health status of your child
- Your child's awareness of the dangers of appliance use (stove, iron) or unusual hazards in the home
- Your child's reaction to being left alone

Age specific Guidelines

What age does your child fall under?

- Children 7 years of age and younger should not be left alone for any period of time.
- Children 8-10 years of age should not be left alone for more than 3 hours.
- Children 11-13 years of age should not be left alone for more than 12 hours.

Supervision by Older Children Guidelines

- A child age 11-13 years of age may baby-sit with the expectation that the parent, guardian or caretaker will be returning within 12 hours to supervise the children.
- An adolescent aged 14-15 years of age can baby-sit for up to 24 hours as long as they can contact their parent, guardian or other responsible adult.
- An adolescent 16 year of age or older providing baby-sitting for younger children for more than 24 hours, must know the parents whereabouts, when they will return and have adult backup.

Consider enrolling your child in a baby-sitting clinic. Check your community education booklet or call you child's school.