



**Protect yourself and your children!
Know and follow the
Maryland Law!**

Staff are available to answer your specific questions about leaving children unattended. There are also other brochures available to help you with important decisions about leaving your child or children without adult supervision.

For inquiries, call
Prince George's County
Department of Social Services
(301) 909-2450



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What's the buzz on when your child can be left alone?



What you need to know!

In response to many calls and inquiries, this brochure is intended to inform parents about

Maryland Family Law requirements to prevent accidents and tragedies caused by **"SUPERVISION NEGLECT."**

Maryland Family Law (Section 5-801) requires that:



Children under 8...

Children under 8 no matter how bright, mature, or "independent" cannot be left alone.

Children under 8 cannot be left alone in parked cars or in public places, like libraries, stores, swimming pools or parks where other adults are just "around."

Children under 8 must have an assigned, dependable caretaker, 13 years or older, to watch them in public places.

Children under 8 can never be left to be supervised by a child who is under 13.

Children over 8

Children over 8 can be left alone for short periods of time, if certain commonsense requirements are met. . .

Children over 8 need to know what to do in the case of an emergency, accident, illness. . .

Children over 8 need to know your work and cell phone numbers, how to call 911 and how to give their correct address.

Children over 8 cannot be alone overnight.

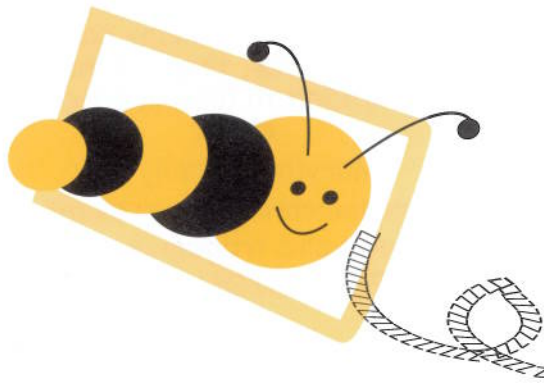
Children over 8 with any kind of disabling mental, physical or emotional handicaps should not be left alone.

Children over 8 need to have a simple "fire drill" since fire is the most common hazard for the child at home alone.



A child must be **13 years or older**, be **dependable** and have **no disabling handicaps** in order to watch a child under 8. Even then, certain commonsense guidelines should be followed . . .

- **Do** a "test run" first. While you are at home, have the 13-year-old practice supervision of the younger child.
- **Do** let the 13-year-old (or older) supervise younger children for short periods of time (while you're away for 20 or 30 minutes) before leaving them to supervise for longer periods of time.
- **Don't** leave the older child with extra responsibilities, like cooking, cleaning, while supervising younger children.
- **Don't** leave a 13-year-old with infant care when they are supervising other children. Even Licensed Daycare Providers have limits on the number of infants and toddlers they can watch.



The "buzz" words are "8" and "13"