



SAFELY HOME

A guide for Larimer County families whose children are staying home alone.

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How old is old enough?

Deciding when a child is ready to be at home alone is a difficult decision. Kids need to be equipped to handle any emergency that might arise when they are home alone. This guide will help you safeguard against some potential emergencies. Here are some general guidelines to help you determine when they might be ready:

AGE APPROPRIATE: (depending on your child's emotional maturity)	
7 and under	Should not be left alone for any period of time.
8-10 years old	Should not be left alone for more than 1.5 hours and only during daylight and early evening hours.
11-12 years old	May be left alone for up to 3 hours but not late at night.
13-15 years old	May be left unsupervised but not overnight.
16-17 years old	May be left unsupervised (in some cases, for up to two consecutive overnight periods).

General Tips:

Any child left home alone needs:

- to memorize their full name, address, and telephone number
- a posted emergency list on who to call in case of an emergency
- you to let the neighbors know that your child may be home alone
- you to call the child several times while you are away (schedule it if you are not getting an answer to your call)
- you to know, and have contact information, for their friends
- to know how to lock windows and doors
- to know not to go into other people's homes (neighbors included) without your permission
- you to designate a safe house for them to run to if they feel like they are in danger
- to know what the rules are
- you to make sure potential hazards are removed or locked up in their environment (kids can be very creative and curious, but not all creativity is safe)
- to know how they will fill their time (something safe and fun)
- to know where the first-aid kit is
- you to set parental controls on technology
- you to discuss the plan in the event that:
 - ✓ someone rings the doorbell
 - ✓ the fire alarm goes off
 - ✓ a fire starts
 - ✓ the power goes out
 - ✓ child and siblings start arguing

Cooking Rules



NO cooking on the stove, unless your child knows how to put out grease fires and what to do if clothing catches on fire.

Teach microwave basics:

- ✓ NO metal/aluminum foil
- ✓ how to use a can opener

How are you going to make sure they have the food that they need? Your school district may be supplying free meals to children who qualify. To get more information on this program visit, _____ or call _____.

Home Hazards

Safety Precautions to consider for your home:

Weapons

By locking up your firearms AND ammunition, there is a 78% lower risk of self-inflicted firearm injuries and an 85% lower risk of unintentional harm among children. Over 80% of firearm suicides among children involves a gun belonging to a family member. If *anyone* in your house is depressed, remove the weapons from the home and place them with a friend or family member until the depression passes so that it removes the potential for impulsive self-harm. 86% of firearm deaths occur amongst men. Carry keys for weapon cases with you and lock up your ammunition separately from the weapon. Kids tend to know where parents store keys!



Medications/Vitamins/Pet Medications

In recent years, nearly 54% of medications that were obtained for *non-medical* use, were taken from a friend or family. They are also a significant cause of overdose poisoning. Place your medications in a locked cabinet to keep your kids and their friends safe.

Alcohol

It's important to keep all alcohol/liquor locked up. Be aware that the internet tells kids that they can find alcohol in mouthwash and hairspray too. Monitor any item containing alcohol closely.

Internet Safety

The internet teaches kids all kinds of things:

- how you can look better if you purge after eating (bulimia)
- how to make a torch with just a can of spray paint and a lighter
- how ugly they really are
- that you can make new and interesting friends and can even meet them in person
- how cutting makes you physically and emotionally feel better
- where and how to get alcohol so that you can be funny and popular



No parent is going to tell their kids that any of these things are okay and yet unrestricted, unmonitored use of the internet invites these things into a child's heart and mind.

Knives/Box Cutters/Razor Blades

Accidents can happen, so can self-harm. According to a report published by the American Public Health Association, up to 30% of teenage girls in some parts of the United States say they have intentionally injured themselves; and about one in four deliberately harmed themselves in the previous year, often by cutting or burning, compared to about one in ten boys. The overall prevalence of self-harm was almost 18%. Self-harm often times becomes an unhealthy coping mechanism for dealing with anxiety or depression. If you notice your teen or adolescent is wearing concealing clothing, look closer and get help.

Lighters/Matches

According to the National Fire Protection Association, most deaths, injuries, and damage from "child playing" fires occur in home structure fires. An average of 7,100 home structure fires per year are caused by play.

Half (52%) of home playing structure fires had a lighter as their heat source, and matches were the heat source in 18%. Fires started by lighters or matches caused 82% of civilian deaths.



The majority of structure fires in homes caused by play were started by males (83%) and 43% were started by a child under the age of 6. Older children were more likely to start outside fires, with 38% of all outside or unclassified fires started by a child between the ages of 10 and 12.

Paints/Solvents/Cleaners in Compressed Spray Cans

Huffing: putting the substance in a cloth and pressing to the mouth

Bagging: pouring the contents into a bag and inhaling through the bag opening

Sniffing or Snorting: inhaling the fumes directly from the container

Spraying: spraying the substance directly into the nose or mouth



Some common signs of inhalant abuse include:

- red eyes
- runny nose
- unusual smelling breath
- paint or stains on clothing or face
- loss of appetite
- drunk appearance
- anxiety
- sores around mouth

The immediate side-effects of inhalant abuse include:

- insomnia
- muscle weakness
- headaches, disorientation, blurred vision
- convulsions
- coma
- suffocation
- nausea, vomiting

Laundry Detergent

Did you know that powder laundry detergent is combustible? If it sits in the sun or in a really warm space, it can catch fire due to the temperature. Always store laundry soap in a cool space.

Vehicles Left at Home

Lock up spare keys to avoid making the front-page news with *that* story! Sometimes temptation is hard for a kid to avoid or peer pressure can get the best of them.

Unsafe Extended Family Environments

If kids are staying with grandparents or are in other home environments, make sure that they understand what they cannot use equipment that may cause injuries (ie., lifts/walkers, scooter) or to touch anything that may not be locked away and is unsafe (ie., medications).



Outdoor Safety

WEAR HELMETS when using/riding hover boards, skateboards, bikes, and make sure all trampolines have a net installed.

Family Resources

Poison Control
1-800-222-1222

Larimer Behavioral Health

Crisis Support: 888-493-8255 or text 38255

<https://www.larimer.org/behavioralhealth/resources>

Caring for you and your family's mental health is the same as caring for physical health!

Libraries

<https://www.mylibrary.us/>

<https://www.fortluptonco.gov/673/Library>

Boys & Girls Club of Larimer County

<https://www.bgcweld.org/>

Partners Mentoring Youth

<https://partnersmentoringyouth.org/>

CPR/1st Aid Training

<http://www.cityofloveland.org/departments/parks-recreation/chilson-recreation-center>

<https://evrpd.colorado.gov/all-open-registrations-for-youth-and-adult-recreation>

Low cost CPR and 1st aid trainings are available through the local Recreation Center.

Healthy Kids Club

<https://www.uhealth.org/services/community-health/healthy-kids/>

Summer fun passes, healthy kids programming

CCCAP (Colorado Child Care Assistance Program)

<https://www.larimer.org/humanservices/public-benefits/ccap>

To see if you qualify for help paying for child care or to see if you can get paid by the County to provide care for friends, families, or neighbors that qualify.

Income Guidelines (225% above the poverty level)

Family Size & Maximum Gross Monthly Income:

- 2 - \$3,232.50
 - 3 - \$4,072.50
 - 4 - \$4,912.50
 - 5 - \$5,752.50
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Larimer Food Bank (emergency food boxes)

<https://foodbanklarimer.org/>

Income Guidelines

Family Size & Maximum Gross Monthly Income:

- 1 - \$2,081
- 2 - \$2,818
- 3 - \$3,555
- 4 - \$4,291
- 5 - \$5,028

Where/ How to Apply: https://foodbanklarimer.org/where_do_i_go/

What To Bring: A form of ID for each person in the family and proof of Larimer County address (i.e. piece of mail), current pay stub.

Hours: Vary per site

LEAP Energy Assistance

<https://www.discovermygoodwill.org/services/leap/>

1-866-432-8435

Income Guidelines

Family Size & Maximum Gross Monthly Income:

- 1 - \$2,619.75
 - 2 - \$3,425.83
 - 3 - \$4,231.92
 - 4 - \$5,038.00
 - 5 - \$5,844.08
-

SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)

<https://coloradopeak.secure.force.com/>

Gross monthly income (household income before any of the program’s deductions are applied), generally, must be at or below 130% of the poverty line. For a family of three, the poverty line used to calculate SNAP benefits in federal fiscal year 2020 is \$1,354 a month. Thus, 130% of the poverty line for a three-person family is \$2,311 a month, or about \$27,700 a year. The poverty level is higher for bigger families and lower for smaller families.

Net income, or household income after deductions are applied, must be at or below the poverty line. And:

Assets must fall below certain limits: households without a member who is elderly or has a disability must have assets of \$2,250 or less, and households with such a member must have assets of \$3,500 or less.

Vaccines for Children (VFC)

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/find-vfc-provider>

No insurance? You can still get your child vaccinated. The Vaccines for Children (VFC) program provides vaccines, at no cost, for children who are uninsured, underinsured, on Medicaid or Medicaid-eligible, and/or Alaskan Native/American Indian. There are more than 500 provider offices, community health centers, and local public health agencies that participate in the VFC Program in Colorado. Visit the VFC website to check your child’s eligibility and find a VFC clinic near you.
