



The following represent minimally acceptable standards for the supervision of children. These guidelines have been developed by social work professionals in collaboration with the community.



*Thanks to Fairfax County
Department of Family
Services for developing
these guidelines.*

Child Supervision Guidelines

***Frederick County
Department of Social
Services***

Child Protective Services

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Child Supervision

**Remember,
these are
guidelines only...**

There may be situations, even within these guidelines, when it is not safe to leave a child unsupervised. Parents are ultimately responsible for making decisions about their child's safety.



Whenever any child is unsupervised/unattended, the following should apply...

- There must be no emotional, medical, or behavioral problems which affect judgment or decision-making skills.
- Child must be comfortable being alone.
- Youth must have a safety plan worked out with the parent/caretaker, which includes:
 - How to access parent or other responsible adult at all times (including knowing the parent/caretaker's whereabouts and having a telephone number where parent can be reached.
 - What to do in case of emergency.
 - Guidelines for acceptable behavior.
 - Knowledge of emergency telephone numbers.
- Youth must demonstrate the ability to follow the safety plan and to make decisions that reflect concern for personal safety.
- When deciding whether or not to leave a minor caretaking for other children, consider the length of time, the number of hour, the age and number of children, and the time of day. These must be consistent with the minor's age, ability, and level of maturity.

SUPERVISION GUIDELINES

7 years & under:

Should not be left alone for any period of time. This may include leaving children unattended in cars, playgrounds, and backyards. The determining consideration would be the dangers in the environment and the ability of the caretaker to intervene.

8 years:

Many 8 year olds are not mature enough to be left alone.

9 to 10 years:

Should not be left alone for more than 1 ½ hours and only during daylight and early evening hours.

11 years:

May be left alone for up to 3 hours but not late at night or in circumstances requiring inappropriate responsibility.

12 years:

May be left alone for up to 8 hours but not late at night or in circumstances requiring inappropriate responsibility.

13 to 15 years:

May be left unsupervised, but not overnight or in circumstances requiring inappropriate responsibility.

16 to 17 years:

May be left unsupervised, occasionally overnight, for periods consistent with their level of maturity and responsibility.