



Catholic
Charities
Diocese of Covington

Providing Help. Creating Hope.

family values

great ideas for modern parents | winter 2014



Should your child stay home alone? *By Diane Mushaben, MA, LPCC*

Every day millions of children under the age of 13 spend at least part of the day without any adult supervision, often after school when parents are at work. Many parents wonder “Is my child old enough to stay home alone? Will they be responsible and mature enough to handle being on their own for limited amounts of time? How can I ensure his or her safety?”

Parents are certainly aware of some potential risks in allowing children to stay home by themselves. Studies show that children who are home without adult supervision are three times more likely to engage in delinquent behavior or be victimized in some way. They are more likely to experiment with drugs or alcohol, particularly prescription medications in the home. They are also more likely to be involved in accidents. With proper planning and preparation, however, risks can be minimized. And the experience of being trusted to stay home alone can also be very positive for children, who can grow in self-confidence and independence. Here are some steps you can take to make the experience of staying home alone safe and enjoyable for your child:



- Consider your child’s age and maturity. Most experts suggest that children under age 10 should not be left alone, and that children under age 12 should not be left unsupervised in the evening.
- Think about where you live. Are there trusted neighbors who will help your child in an emergency? Do you feel your neighborhood is reasonably safe?
- How does your child handle following directions? Are they capable of following directions and solving problems in your absence? How do they handle unexpected situations?
- Make sure all alcohol and medications are not easily accessible to children.
- Ask your child to share feelings about being alone and consider his/her response carefully.



If you decide that your child is mature enough to be left alone for part of the day, make sure your child knows:

- how to reach you or another trusted adult at work or by cell phone;
- how to dial 911;
- to call or go to a trusted neighbor if there are any problems;
- to check in with you upon arrival home;
- to tell callers you are unavailable and to take a message;
- your rules regarding after-school activities such as using the computer having friends over, or going to a friend’s house;
- which appliances may be used, (e.g. the microwave) and which are not to be used, (e.g. the stove);
- not to open the door for or talk to anyone who comes to the house, unless the visit has been pre-approved by you.

Take time to plan activities and chores for your child to do while you are gone, so that he or she is not bored or lonely. With careful planning, you can make his or her time alone both positive and safe!

our
mission

To promote healing, restore hope and affirm human potential through services that empower, voices that speak for justice; and, partnerships that strengthen communities.

Group Education and Support

Our Parenting Support Programs can be available at your Parish, School or Community. To register for any of our programs please call the Intake Department at Catholic Charities, (859) 581-8974, for more information.

Family Wellness

A lively, interactive curriculum that teaches parents the skills they need to raise their children successfully and builds on existing strengths. Each session teaches skills that can be used right away. This program is offered through *Stronger Together*, a partnership of the Northern Kentucky Community Action Commission and the Women's Crisis Center.
No charge.

Parenting classes are ongoing starting every 4 weeks. Contact the intake department for the next available class.

NeighborWorks

Realizing the American Dream

Homebuyer Education Class

Saturday, March 1, 2014

Saturday, April 5, 2014

Saturday, May 3, 2014

Come to this class and learn how to buy a home! Certified housing counselors will walk you through the process, answer your questions, and give you the information you need to realize the dream of homeownership. *No charge.*

Parenting Talks and Workshops

A parenting educator is available to speak to your school or community group on a variety of topics. Call Mary Fleischman at (859) 581-8974.

Substance Abuse Treatment Services

Are you concerned about your teen's drug or alcohol use? Do you feel that you are fighting a losing battle? Catholic Charities provides counseling services for teenagers. We can assess for drug or alcohol problems, make recommendations, and work with your teen to make positive changes. We work with parents and teenagers who are struggling with the same issues that you are currently facing; you are not alone.

Foreclosure/Mortgage Delinquency Counseling

Catholic Charities offers foreclosure counseling and mortgage delinquency counseling at no charge. Call for an appointment.

Individual, Marriage and Family Counseling

Counseling addresses emotional and relationship issues which impair personal and social functioning, and includes work with individuals, couples and families.

Support Group

Is someone you love separated from you and your family because he or she is incarcerated? You are welcome to attend our support group to listen and share stories, and to express needs. Resource people will be available to consult as the need arises. The group meets on the third Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at Catholic Charities. The group is free; no registration needed.



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**THE BANK
OF KENTUCKY**
you know us...we know you

