

Guidelines for Unsupervised Children

Failure to provide necessary supervision or child care arrangements [M.S. 626.556, subd. 2 (f) (3)]

Failure to provide for necessary supervision or child care arrangements occurs when a child is unable to provide for their own basic needs or safety, or the basic needs or safety of another child in their care. [M.S. 626.556, subd. 2 (3)]

Reports alleging inadequate supervision or child care arrangements may be screened in for a child protection response, including:

- Children age 7 and under who are left alone for any period of time
- Children ages 8-10 who are left alone for more than three hours
- Children ages 11-13 who are left alone for more than 12 hours
- Children ages 14-15 who are left alone for more than 24 hours
- Children ages 16-17 may be left alone for over 24 hours with a plan in place concerning how to respond to an emergency

Reports alleging inadequate child care arrangements may be screened in for a child protection response according to the following guidelines:

- Children under age 11 should not provide child care (babysitting)
- Children ages 11-15 who are placed in a child care role are subject to the same time restrictions of being left alone as listed above
- Children ages 16-17 may be left alone for more than 24 hours with adequate adult back-up supervision

Note: If children are left alone at the time the report is received by the local child welfare agency, and the circumstances fall outside of the timelines listed above, the local agency may refer the matter to local law enforcement for a child welfare and safety check.

Guidelines for Providing Supervision for a Child(ren) by an Older Child

The age guidelines are intended to provide a basic framework and standard to follow in providing information to parents and reports of child neglect. Each report must be evaluated individually on the basis of age and the following considerations:

Will the child(ren) be willing and able to reach a parent?

What is the maturity level of the child(ren)?

Does the child(ren) have a disability or health problem that makes adult supervision necessary?

Is the child(ren) in charge of a younger sibling?

What is the child(ren)'s reaction to being home alone?

Does the child(ren) have a behavioral or emotional problem (i.e., suicidal, fire setting, aggressive behaviors) that makes adult supervision necessary?

Is a young child(ren) using the kitchen stove, iron or appliance, which poses a danger because of their age?

Does the child(ren) know what to do in an emergency, when to call a parent, when to call 911, how to leave the home in case of fire, where to go?

Is there a dependable adult nearby that the child(ren) can and will turn to in an emergency?

Are there unusual hazards in the home?

Can the child complete daily tasks and solve problems?

Is the reporter aware of any other reasons why the child(ren) should not be home alone?