

## **At Home Learning Program: Considerations for Students who are Home Alone**

The age at which children in Canada can be left at home alone for reasonable and short periods of time varies from province to province, ranging anywhere from approximately 10 to 12 years. There is no legislation in Alberta that determines an age at which a child may safely be left home alone. Child Safe Canada states that “no child under the age of 10 should be left alone for any period of time”.

Alberta’s Child, Youth, and Family Enhancement Act explains that if a child’s safety is endangered by not having adequate care or supervision (being left home alone), then that child may be considered neglected. Neglect is determined by assessing the length of time the child is left alone, the frequency with which it occurs, and the degree of isolation in conjunction with the child’s age, maturity level, knowledge, responsibilities, and available resources. Teachers have a duty to report information to designated authorities.

All parents/guardians hold the responsibility to make a responsible and safe choice of when their child can safely begin staying home alone.

Considerations for parents/guardians:

- How does my child feel about being left alone?
- Does my child understand and follow household safety rules?
- Does my child have access to a basic first aid kit and knowledge of how to use it?
- Does my child have access to a telephone to seek assistance in frightening or emergency situations?

Being home alone should be a gradual, supervised process to ensure your child has the skills, maturity, and confidence necessary to be safe and act responsibly if faced with an emergency situation. An often overlooked aspect of home alone safety is the focus on your child’s comfort and confidence. If a child is nervous or scared, they will not react safely in an emergency.

Child Safe Canada offers a ‘Home Alone Safety’ course for youth at least 10 years of age that teaches safety, first aid, and comfort skills. Please visit [https://childsafecanada.com/programs/youth\\_ages\\_8/home\\_alone\\_safety\\_plus\\_first\\_aid\\_10](https://childsafecanada.com/programs/youth_ages_8/home_alone_safety_plus_first_aid_10) for more information and to register. Online options are available.