

**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.*



Fairfax County
**Child Abuse
Hotline**

(24 hours a day/7 days a week)

703/324-7400
TTY 703/222-9452

**For information on
Child Care Resources, call
703/449-9555**



Available in alternate formats by calling (703) 324-7873;
please allow two weeks for processing.



2/98

Child Supervision



3-1-1

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.

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

- There must be no emotional, medical, or behavioral problems which affect judgement or decision-making skills.
- Child must be comfortable being alone.
- Youth must have a safety plan worked out with the parent/caretaker, which includes:
 1. 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).

2. What to do in case of emergency.
 3. Guidelines for acceptable behavior.
 4. 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.

Child Supervision Guidelines...

7 years & under

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

8 to 10 years

Should not be left alone for more than 1½ hours and only during daylight and early evening hours.

11 to 12 years

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

13 to 15 years

May be left unsupervised, but not overnight.

16 to 17 years

May be left unsupervised (in some cases, for up to two consecutive overnight periods).

Guidelines for babysitters are being developed.