

Leaving a child alone requires serious consideration and sound judgment on the part of a responsible parent.

**Some things to consider when planning to leave your child alone:**

- Is the child emotionally mature?
- Is the child trustworthy and responsible?
- Does the child have special needs?
- Does the child feel comfortable being left alone?
- Has the child practiced the safety plan?

Children (at any age) who a parent feels is not emotionally capable or mature enough should **NEVER** be left alone.

**Emergency Contact Numbers**

Emergency Services:	911
Fire Department:	911
Medical Emergencies:	911
Poison Control:	1-800-222-1222
Family Members' Contact Numbers:	

Unattended  
**CHILDREN**  
...it's against the law!

Maryland Department of Human Services  
311 West Saratoga Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Department of Human Services  
1-800-332-6347



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# Plan For Your Child's Safety



Unattended  
**CHILDREN**  
...it's against the law!

**In Maryland there are laws that are meant to protect your children from harm and danger.**

Maryland Family Law §5-701 states that leaving a child unattended could be considered CHILD NEGLECT, which is defined as failing to give proper care and attention to a child.

### Also

Maryland Family Law §5-801 states that it is a CRIME to leave a child younger than 8 years old unattended, locked or confined to a home, car, building or other enclosure without proper supervision.

The law also states that a child cannot be left unattended without proper supervision by a reliable person at least 13 years of age. This is punishable by fines or imprisonment.

**But there's more to it than this...**

**Unattended children at any age can get hurt, injured or even killed without proper supervision.**



## What can you do?

**As a parent or care provider  
ALWAYS PLAN FOR SAFETY!**

**Develop a safety plan to  
practice with your child.**

**Make sure your child understands these potential dangers and how to avoid them:**

- Fire and medical emergencies
- Household hazards such as matches, cleaning solutions, drugs, stoves and swimming pools
- Knives, guns and other weapons
- Strangers and visiting friends
- Create a plan for responding to these dangers and practice it with your child
- Make sure your child knows who to call in case of an emergency

**When planning to go out  
without your child:**

- Call a reliable babysitter, friend or family member to watch the child in your absence
- Provide meals not requiring the use of oven, stove or microwave
- Leave an emergency number so you can be contacted quickly

**Younger children:**

- Keep children in eyesight when possible
- Use a room monitor to listen for them while they are sleeping or napping
- Be present with children in the bathroom, bathtub and kitchen
- Do not leave children alone while answering the phone or involved in other activities

## When shopping:

- Supervise your child at all times
- Plan your shopping times when you have someone to help watch your child
- Always take your child with you when leaving the car

**Taking your child with you when  
leaving the car prevents:**

- Heat or cold exposure
- Carbon monoxide poisoning
- Kidnapping
- The child being physically injured by a window, door, car lighter or other vehicle parts
- The child being injured or harmed by accidentally placing the car in gear
- Siblings harming each other while left unattended in a vehicle

**A parent or caregiver who does not plan for safety may be reported to Child Protective Services and/or law enforcement.**

*Call  
somebody  
to watch  
the kids!*

**...so plan for your  
child's safety!!**