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RICE COUNTY

SOCIAL SERVICES

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Rice County Social Services Home Alone Guidelines

These are the “Home Alone” guidelines that are used by the Rice County Social Services Child and Family Services Unit. The guidelines are dependent upon the comfort and maturity level of the children involved. All children left home alone must know safety and emergency procedures and how and when to get help.

Children ages 7 years and younger are not old enough to be left home alone for any period of time.

Children ages 8 to 10 may be left home alone for up to three hours such as before or after school. Rice County Social Services does not recommend leaving these children home alone all day nor is it recommended that they watch younger siblings/children.

Children ages 11 to 13 should not be left alone for more than 12 hours. They could be old enough to watch younger siblings but Rice County Social Services would not recommend that they watch infants for a long duration of time (i.e. longer than 1-2 hours). Also it is suggested that this is a good age for children to take the Red Cross babysitting course at the Northfield or Faribault Hospitals.

Children ages 14 to 15 may be left alone for up to 24 hours.

Children ages 16 to 17 may be left alone for over 24 hours with a plan in place concerning how to respond in an emergency