



Crow Wing County Community Services Reminds Parents/Guardians of the MN State Guidelines Regarding Leaving Children Alone

Crow Wing County Community Services is reminding parents/guardians of the MN State Guidelines regarding the ages of children who may be left alone.

With the end of the school year, many parents and caregivers are seeking information about childcare options during the summer months. For some families the additional financial obligation of childcare is a factor in the stay-at-home versus child-care decision.

This time of year, Crow Wing County Community Services frequently receives phone calls from parents/guardians questioning how old a child needs to be to stay home alone, be in caregiver roles, and/or from concerned citizens.

Minnesota Child Maltreatment Screening Guidelines are used by child protection agencies across the state of MN in determining if a report regarding lack of supervision needs to be assessed by a Social Worker. Minnesota Statute 626.556 addresses the issue of failure to provide necessary supervision or childcare arrangements.

Reports alleging inadequate supervision or childcare arrangements may be screened in for a child protection response, including children's ages:

- 7 and under left alone for any period
- 8-10 left alone for more than three hours
- 11-13 left alone for more than 12 hours
- 14-15 left alone for more than 24 hours

In addition:

- 16-17 may be left alone for more than 24 hours with a plan in place on how to respond to an emergency.

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

Children:

- Under the age of 11 should not provide childcare
- Children ages 11-15, when placed in a childcare role, are subject to the same time restrictions of being left alone as listed above

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Our Vision: Being Minnesota's favorite place.

Our Mission: Serve well. Deliver value. Drive results.

Our Values: Be responsible. Treat people right. Build a better future.

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- Children 16-17, who are placed in a childcare role, may be left alone for more than 24 hours with adequate adult back up supervision.

Modifying factors affecting screening decisions may include:

- A child's mental ability and maturity level
- The accessibility of the parent/guardian or designated caregiver to a child by phone and/or in person.
- The presence of intellectual deficits, psychological problems, or mental health concerns; existence of physical problems or disabilities
- The behavioral history of a child, including suicidal thoughts or actions, fire setting, delinquency, vandalism, or assault
- A child's age, if using the kitchen stove, an iron, or other appliances
- Establishment of a well understood escape plan that has been worked out by the parent(s), or fire drill practice that has been rehearsed with the child; a working fire/smoke detector in the home
- The presence of unusual hazards in the home
- A child feeling confident and safe when left alone

Additional information regarding available childcare in your area and income-based childcare financial assistance can be accessed by calling Child Care Assistance at (218) 824-1250.

To make a mandated or non-mandated Child Maltreatment Report, or for more information regarding the Minnesota Child Maltreatment Screening Guidelines contact Crow Wing County Child Protection intake at (218) 824-1140 or visit the Crow Wing County Website at www.crowwing.gov

Crow Wing County Community Services is dedicated to providing excellent and efficient services by performing its mission of promoting and protecting the health, well-being, and self-sufficiency of Crow Wing County residents.