

### Why Should I Be Permitted to Stay Home Alone?

Do you remember what a pain it was to go grocery shopping with your mom, or having to go to your dad's doctor appointment when you were in fifth grade? I am sick of it, and I think that all fifth-graders should be allowed to stay home alone because they are responsible, it could save our parents money, and we have good protection.

The first reason I think I should be able to stay home alone is because I am a responsible person. I know not to wander off or go outside. For example, when a young person is home alone, people who live nearby or strangers from other places might take advantage of that and try to get into the house. When a person is alone and decides to go outside, he or she is at risk of getting hurt. I am aware of these dangers, and would not go outside or allow anyone to come inside with me. I also know that I should not use the stove or toaster oven when I am alone. I know that I could make a sandwich or have a bowl of cereal that would not involve cooking. Most of all, my parents can trust me to behave as they have taught me and to obey the rules. I am a responsible person.

Even though responsibility is life-changing, saving money is definitely important. Staying at home alone would save my parents money. I know the economy isn't good right now and the last thing my parents want to do is spend money on things they don't need. For example, one of my past babysitters got paid about \$50 per kid, and there are three kids, so that would be \$150. That's a lot of money. With me staying home alone, there would be no money involved and that could help us save up for more important items such as gas, groceries, or new furniture.

Although saving money is great, having the advantage of living next to the police and fire department is awesome! Having the police live right next to us could save us from a deadly situation or just in case of an emergency. For instance, if something were to happen like a fire, the fire department could be there in the blink of an eye. Or if someone tried to break into the house, the police would be there before something could happen. I also know not to answer the door or pick up the telephone when I am alone unless it is my mom, dad, or someone I know. For example, if the UPS guy comes to deliver a package and rings the doorbell, I will just let him leave the package at the doorstep and let my mom or dad deal with that later. Or if a salesperson calls our phone number, I will let them leave a message and I will let my mom know they called, and she can deal with that.

Finally, the last reason I think I should be able to stay home alone is because I have my parents' phone numbers, those of other close relatives who live near us, and I know 911. For example, if my parents were at the grocery store and I fell, I would be in big trouble if I wasn't near a phone or some sort of contact. My solution would be to get a Life Alert. I know that is a device for older people, but if I had it, there would be less chance of me getting hurt. It would give my parents peace of mind and it is safe for me to use.

One of the arguments my parents might have against me staying home alone is that I am not old enough. My parents think that a child has to be twelve or older in order to stay at home alone. I researched that argument and the federal law says that there is no age limit in the state of Arizona for a child to stay at home alone. For example, when my parents have to go grocery shopping, I can stay home alone to save them time. If my sisters and I go with my mom, we will slow down the process and possibly get in trouble, like knocking down the wine bottles. Then my mom would have to pay for that and that brings us back to the financial issues.

Parents, please consider letting your fifth-grader stay home alone. It is safe, it will save parents money, and it teaches personal responsibility. You may think that you have given your child everything they want or need, but until you let them stay home alone, you haven't.