

## DEAL WITH RISK BEFORE LEAVING CHILDREN HOME ALONE

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The movie "Home Alone" and its sequels have portrayed a child's survival skills in a humorous and unrealistic manner. The realities facing children who find themselves home alone are very different. Most children are inadequately prepared to avoid injuries, deal with emergencies, handle phone calls or visitors at the door, or cope with the possibilities of kidnapping or molestation.

Teaching them what to say or do and rehearsing with them will make your children and you more confident knowing that your children have the knowledge to deal with issues that may come up.

Many issues and potential risks need to be considered before a parent places a child in this situation:

1. Make sure your child has a key. You don't want him trying to slip through a window. Your child must be able to keep track of a key, know how to lock and unlock doors easily, and get into the home quickly and lock the door behind him. Instruct your child not to enter your home if the door is open or unlocked, or if anything seems unusual.
2. Designate a responsible adult who would be accessible by phone or lives a short distance from your home for the child to check in with at intervals. Ask your child to call you or the designated adult as soon as she gets home from school.
3. Instruct your child to come right home unless other plans have been agreed upon. You can never reiterate this enough: Tell your children to never accept a ride from a stranger and to not tell strangers that they're going to be home alone.
4. Sit down with your child and make a list of people who are allowed to come over when he is home alone.
5. Tell your child never to play with dangerous items such as weapons, power tools and barbecue grills. Make sure all firearms are securely locked away.
6. Install a peephole at your child's eye level. Instruct your child to look through the peephole to see who is at the door when the doorbell rings, and to open the door only if the person is on the approved list. Some families have a rule to not answer the door at all when someone is home alone. Have a family code word.
7. Post important phone numbers and special instructions in a central location, such as near the



phone or on the fridge. Instruct your child to screen calls unless it is someone who knows the family code word. If possible, leave your cellular phone number. Knowing your child can reach you in an instant will help put you and your child more at ease.

8. Show your child where the first aid kit is and how to use the items in it. It is important to have an alternate escape route in case one is blocked by fire. Plan a meeting place outside your home in case of fire.

9. Discuss ahead of time what your child plans to do when she arrives at home. You should always have a schedule for her and let her know exactly what you expect.

Remember, no matter how mature your child acts, he or she is still a child. Children invariably make mistakes; they don't always react in a situation as you hope they would. Even if they start off well without adult supervision, they can get spooked and develop real fears about being home alone.

Start on a trial, part-time basis, if possible. Role-play different situations; for example, "what would you do if your lost your key? What if a delivery person came to the door? How do you answer the phone?"

Give your children lots of encouragement, support and reinforcement and treat mistakes as learning experiences instead of failures. Tell them how much you appreciate their helpfulness, self-reliance and cooperation while you are away.

## EARTH DAY CRAFT: COFFEE GROUND "FOSSILS"



Create your own fossils to display by using old coffee grounds. These work well as visual aids for science projects and makes a fun Earth Day craft for kids.

What you'll need:

- 1 cup of used coffee grounds
- 1/2 cup of cold coffee
- 1 cup of flour
- 1/2 cup of salt
- Wax paper
- Mixing bowl
- Some small objects to make impressions in the dough (Shaped cookie cutters work well.)

- Empty can or a butter knife
- Toothpicks, optional
- String to hang your fossil, optional

How to make it:

1. Stir the together the coffee grounds, cold coffee, flour, and salt until well mixed.
2. Knead the dough together and then flatten it out onto the waxed paper.
3. Use the can to cut out circles of the dough or use the dull knife to cut slabs large enough to fit your "fossil" objects.
4. Press your objects firmly into the dough. When you take the object out, you have your "fossil". If you want to hang the fossil, poke holes into the edge to hold the string.
5. Let the fossil dry overnight (and up to two days) and then hang it if you wish.

Tips: To reduce the drying time, bake the fossils for a short period of time to get the "dough" to harden.

[crafts.kaboose.com/fossil.html](http://crafts.kaboose.com/fossil.html)

## OPERATION MILITARY CHILD CARE SUBSIDY!!



Here's how you can get started:

Find out which program applies to you.

for more information call Child Care Aware® Specialists Toll Free: 1-800-424-2246, or [msp@naccrra.org](mailto:msp@naccrra.org)

[www.naccrra.org/MilitaryPrograms/](http://www.naccrra.org/MilitaryPrograms/)

## LANE AND DOUGLAS COUNTY EVENTS

### Lane

#### PARENT-EXPO

(For Moms & Dads, and Grandparents too!)

April 30th, 2011, Saturday 1p-5p

at the Wheeler Pavilion

Lane County Fairgrounds—Eugene



Public Works Day is Back!

Thursday, May 19, 2011, 8 to 3 p.m.

Roosevelt Yard, 1820 Roosevelt Boulevard

### Douglas:

4/16 9-2pm Healthy Kids Day at the YMCA in Roseburg

4/30 10-3pm Celebrate Children Event at The Wildlife Safari



Oceanfest - Winchester Bay

July 15-17, 2011

Come on over and enjoy three fun filled days at the Coast. Live Music, Beach Blvd. Bazaar, children's Parade, Open House at the shops, Famous Seafood Barbecue, Games for young and old. Coast Guard Demonstrations...Kayak races on the Umpqua River. A summer's worth of fun packed into three days.

## GREAT WEBSITE TO VISIT

Natural History Museum: [natural-history.uoregon.edu/education-and-events](http://natural-history.uoregon.edu/education-and-events)

Willamlane Lane: [www.willamalane.org/](http://www.willamalane.org/)

Spark Plug Dance: [www.sparkplugdance.org/](http://www.sparkplugdance.org/)

Lane County 21: [www.211lane.org](http://www.211lane.org)

Science Factory: [www.sciencefactory.org/programs](http://www.sciencefactory.org/programs)

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