

Childcare and COVID-19

With many children suddenly home from school, families are faced with difficult decisions regarding childcare, supervision and their own work. Please see below FAQ's related to potential childcare issues relevant to Colorado:

What age are children allowed to stay home alone?

The laws of Colorado do not set a specific age after which a child legally can stay home alone. When thinking about leaving children alone, whether, for a short or long time, it is important for parents to consider the risks involved. There are many potential risks to children that must be considered. There are also risks for parents as well. **In general, Colorado has accepted the ages of 10 to be alone and 12 to babysit as a guideline** for when it might be appropriate for a child to be left alone for short periods of time. This standard is based upon the Colorado Child Labor Law, which deems 12 years as the minimum age for employment, for example, as a babysitter.

What should I consider if I do choose to leave my children home alone?

- Is your child capable of taking care of and protecting themselves?
- Is your child mentally capable of recognizing and avoiding danger and making sound decisions?
- Is your child emotionally ready to be alone? Will they feel confident and secure or feel afraid, lonely or bored?
- Does your child know what to do and who to call if a problem or emergency arises?
- Does your child have any special physical, emotional or behavioral problems that make it unwise to leave them alone?
- Where are the parents?
- Can the parents get home quickly if needed?
- Can the parents be reached by phone?
- Do the children know where the parents are and how to reach them?
- When and for how long are the children left alone?
- Have the parents arranged with nearby adults to be available in case a problem arises?
- Are there meals/snacks available that do not require use of the oven or stove?

What do I do if my children can't remain home alone and I don't have daycare?

Contact close friends, family and neighbors to see if they can help. Trade with friends/neighbors to alternate child care with them. Contact local churches to see if there are licensed child care providers that may have openings. Many social media groups are advertising assistance and openings in home daycares (Nextdoor, Facebook, etc)

What if I have no options after considering home alone and close support options?

Should you be faced with the very difficult decision to leave your child home alone and it is not safe please call Human Services for assistance at 303-688-4825. We are here as a partner in helping you keep your children safe!