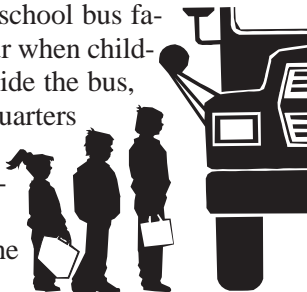


School Bus Safety Rules

Brought to you by the National PTA School bus safety starts with you, every morning and every afternoon. Take a few minutes to make sure your kids understand the rules of the road. Most school bus fatalities occur when children are outside the bus, and three quarters of these tragedies involve children under the age of nine.



Make sure your children know these rules:

- Be on time.
- Never run to or from the bus.
- Stand back from the curb.
- Don't push or shove.
- Stay in your seat.
- Don't yell or shout.
- Always obey the driver.
- Wait for the driver's signal before crossing.
- Always cross at least 10 feet in front of the bus.
- Never crawl under a school bus.

Meet the bus

Coordinate with other parents to make sure that an adult is present at the bus stop every day, especially with children under the age of nine.

Remove drawstrings

Your kids' favorite clothing may not always be the safest. Drawstrings can catch in school bus doors, playground equipment, fences and escalators. Remove, shorten, or replace drawstrings with another kind of fastener.

By following simple rules, you can keep your kids safe before they get on the bus.

ECAC—The Exceptional Children's Assistance Center

by Marlyn Wells—Parent Educator, Exceptional Children's Assistance Center, NCPEN member

Since 1980, The Exceptional Children's Assistance Center (ECAC) has grown from an all-volunteer parent organization to a full service parent training and information center serving families in North Carolina. ECAC now employs 20 full-time and part-time staff members and, in addition to the main office in Davidson, has satellite offices in Raleigh and New Bern.

The current services offered by our parent training and information center project for North Carolina families of children with disabilities include:

- Individual assistance with education problems
- Parent Education Workshops in a variety of subjects including special education law, parent adjustment, communication skills, pre-school services, transition and adult planning, inclusion,

leadership, and writing individualized education plans

- Information and referral
- Newsletter
- Lending library
- Information and assistance to parent groups
- Parent-to-parent support

Each year ECAC responds to more than 12,000 individual requests for information and support on our toll-free Parent Information Line (1-800-962-6817), and the newsletter mailing list totals more than 20,000.

ECAC is first and foremost a parent organization, and all parent educators who answer the toll-free information line or conduct workshops are themselves parents of children with disabilities. ECAC understands the grief of the parent of a newborn or newly identified child with a

disability. ECAC knows the frustration of meeting with well-intentioned professionals who do not speak "English," and ECAC believes in the value and potential of every child. ECAC also clearly understands the difficult decisions faced by many parents and provides information and support without judgment.

ECAC Parent Information Line at 1-800-962-6817 or visit the ECAC website at:

www.ecac-parentcenter.org



At Home Alone

by Karen DeBord, Ph.D., State Extension Specialist, Child Development, North Carolina State University, NCPEN member

Before a child is left at home alone, a family must make its own decisions concerning whether the child has reached the age to begin self-care. It should be a decision made by the child and parent together when both feel ready for self-care to begin. Every family's situation is different, and your plan will depend on your location and resources.

Unfortunately, no magic age exists when children develop the maturity and good sense they need to stay alone.

However, you can look for signs that show your child may be ready.

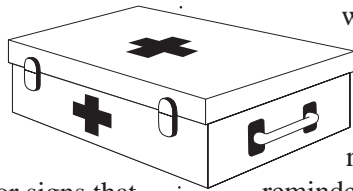
First, your child should show a desire and willingness to stay alone. Children who are easily frightened or who express an unwillingness to say alone are probably not ready for this responsibility. In addition, your child should be able to consider alternatives and make decisions independently. Children who are able to get ready for school on time, solve problems on their own, complete homework and household chores with minimum supervision and remember to tell you where they are going and when they will be back are demonstrating some of the skills they will need to care for themselves. For many children, these abilities begin to appear between the ages of 10 and 12. Others, however, may need a few more years to develop the skills and sense of responsibility they will need to stay alone.

Finally, your child should be able to talk easily with you about interests and concerns. You need good parent-child communication to ensure that any fears or problems that arise from staying alone will be quickly discussed and resolved.

If your child shows you such signs, you may want to consider self-care. However, you should consider several other factors including the

safety of your neighborhood, the availability of adults nearby and how long your child will be alone. If your neighborhood is unsafe, if there are no adults nearby to call in case of an emergency or if your child must remain alone for a long time, you should continue to use some form of child care even if your child seems ready to stay alone.

Children in self-care may have asked to be left home alone or may feel that they have outgrown their child-care setting. The following is a checklist that providers can share with the children and their parents. The list may help both child and parent decide if the child is ready. Parents need to be reminded, however, that safety should be the No. 1 concern. I can...



- Lock and unlock doors and windows.
- Tell time.
- Give my name, address and directions to my farm, ranch, home or apartment.
- Give my telephone number.
- Explain how I would handle first aid for cuts and scrapes, burns, nose-bleeds, poisoning, bites, and eye injuries.
- Find the first-aid supplies.
- Identify two escape routes from home in case of a fire.
- Show my parents how I can correctly handle telephone calls.
- Show my parents how I handle strangers at the door.
- Explain how to reach my parents by telephone or radio.
- Name two adults to contact in an emergency. Identify a safe place to seek shelter during a storm.
- Name five household rules and say which ones were followed last week.
- Give an example of a time when I had to figure out and decide for myself what was the right thing to do.

- Give an example of a recent talk with my parents about a problem where they helped me think of a solution
- Explain to my parents what to do if I am bored or lonely.
- Show my parents what I do when I get home in the afternoon.
- Fix my family three snack foods by myself. 🍴

Excerpted from At Home Alone by Karen DeBord.

For more information or tips please visit <http://www.nncc.org>

NOVEMBER 13, 2000

Parents play an important role in keeping their children safe, healthy and drug free at home, school and in the community. Parent Involvement Day calls on parents to make a real effort to spend time with their children and get involved in their lives. This day also Kick-offs American Education Week, (November 12-18) which raises public awareness about the value of education and calls attention to the accomplishments of public schools and their needs. 🍴

For more information visit the Parenting Coalition at: <http://www.parentingcoalition.org/>

If I Had My Child to Raise Over Again

by Diane Loomans

If I had my child to raise all over again, I'd do less correcting, and more connecting. I'd take my eyes off my watch and watch with my eyes. I would care to know less and know to care more. I'd take more hikes and fly more kites. I'd stop playing serious and seriously play. I'd run through more fields and gaze at more stars. I'd do more hugging and less tugging. I would be firm less often and affirm much more. I'd build self-esteem first and the house later. I'd teach less about the love of power and more about the power of love. 🍴

