

BENTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

581 Highway 23 NE • P.O. Box 159 • Foley, MN 56329
Administrative: (320) 968-7201 • FAX: (320) 968-6885
Jail: (320) 968-8180 • FAX: (320) 968-6347
Records: (320) 968-8150



Troy Heck, Sheriff
Neal Jacobson, Chief Deputy

Topic: Latch Key Kids / After School Safety Tips

Working parents – that’s the majority of American families today – share the anxiety, frustration, and even fear involved in leaving children “on their own” when school lets out. What do you do when children are too old for day care, but far from grown up? Child care arrangements with neighbors and relatives are not always possible.

What To Do

- ? Make sure your children are ready to care for themselves, if you leave them alone.
- ? Teach them basic safety rules.
- ? Know where your kids are, what they are doing, and who they are with.

Are They Ready? Can Your Children –

- ? Be trusted to go straight home after school?
- ? Easily use the telephone, locks, and kitchen appliances?
- ? Follow rules and instructions well?
- ? Handle unexpected situations without panicking?
- ? Stay alone without being afraid?

Talk it over with them and listen to their concerns and ideas. Work out rules on having friends over, homework, household chores and television. Remember, staying at home alone can build a child’s self-esteem, sense of responsibility, and practical skills.

Teach Your Children

- ? How to get a hold of you. Make sure important numbers are posted by the phone. Consider one of the new kid friendly cell phones with parental control.
- ? To check in with you or a neighbor immediately after arriving home.
- ? How to dial 9-1-1.
- ? To never accept gifts or rides from people they do not know well.
- ? How to use the door and window locks, and alarm system, if you have one.
- ? To never let anyone into the home without your permission.
- ? To never let anyone at the door, or on the phone, know that they’re alone. Instruct them to not answer the door and/or to say that “Mom or Dad can’t come to the phone right now.”
- ? To carry a house key on them in a safe place.
- ? How to escape in case of a fire.
- ? To let you know about anything that frightens them or makes them feel uncomfortable.