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## IS YOUR CHILD READY TO STAY **HOME ALONE**

Putting together a schedule of summer activities for your child can be a challenge. Like many parents, you might be trying to decide if it is safe to leave your school-age child home alone during the summer break. Your child might be ready to stay home alone if your child:

- is willing to stay alone
- acts responsibly and follows rules
- knows how to handle emergencies

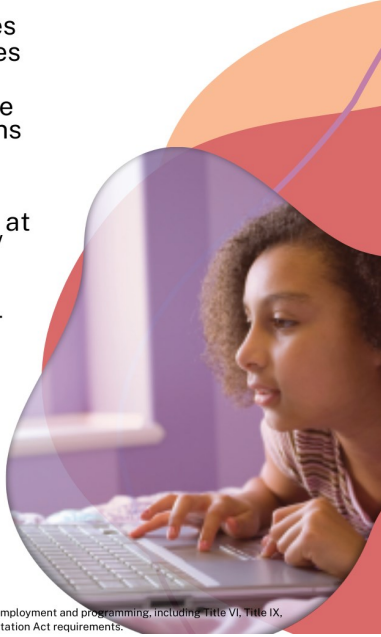
UW-Madison Extension offers a free online video class called **Home Alone**. The lessons were developed to help you prepare your child for self-care.

Watch the videos together with your child at <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/homealone/>

**En español**  
<https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/homealone-espanol/>

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## What is your favorite summer memory as a teen?

### Summer Choices for Teens

Summer can really sneak up on the parents of young teens. By the time parents realize their child has aged out of their stand-by day camp, it may be too late to register for summer teen programs. Or maybe your child has begun a campaign against another summer with the babysitter, and you can't really blame them for wanting a more grown-up summer experience. This is a wonderful opportunity for teens to begin to take responsibility for how they spend their time, and to discover the possible benefits and draw-backs to these decisions.

Finding the right summer program that supports the needs of your teen and the rest of your family can take some work, but the payoff is worth it. With some guidance, your teen can put together a summer plan that is intentional, valuable, and most importantly, safe.

### Goal Clarification

It's important to start by discussing goals with your teen when planning for the summer. Perhaps your number one goal is that he or she completes a required community service project for school, while your teen is more interested in finding a job with a friend. Completing a goal clarification activity can help you both understand each other's point of view, and then provide a place to begin a conversation about summer planning.

Review the list below. Add in any additional goals you or your teen feel are important for the summer, or remove any that are irrelevant. Individually, rank these items by writing them in a list order of importance, with the most important at the top of the list and the least important at the bottom.

- Earn money
- Complete service/school requirements
- Build resume
- Have fun
- Make new friends
- Gain new skills
- Give back to community
- Spend time with old friends
- Train in their sport or instrument
- Improve old skills
- Spend time with family, including vacation
- Staying busy and challenged
- Being safe

Compare lists and see where you align and where you differ. Then, have a discussion based on the following:

1. **Address the non-negotiable first.** There may be some goals that are non-negotiable for your family. Perhaps you need your teen to take driver's training over the summer so they can help the family with transportation, or maybe your teen needs to complete community service hours in order to graduate.
2. **Seek to understand.** This is an important thing for both parents and teens to remember. It may seem frivolous to you that your teen ranked making new friends so highly, but perhaps there is an issue with old friends of which you are unaware. Taking time for both sides to explain and understand the ranking is an important part of this process.
3. **Allow them to make mistakes.** Even if you think your teen's plan to take a summer job scooping ice cream with her best friend will put too much stress on that particular friendship, it's important for your teen to have the opportunity to make these kinds of decisions. As long as your teen is not placed in any danger, and also understands the expectation to follow through on commitments, your teen can gain a tremendous amount of wisdom from unexpected consequences.

Discussing and prioritizing goals with your teen for the summer is an important step in figuring out how to meet the goals you both set for your teen's time and experience.



Join free online parenting classes. Connect with other parents. Get practical, positive parenting ideas. Help children grow.

Register: <https://parenting.extension.wisc.edu/online-parenting-classes/>

### June 2023

June 1 at 7 PM: **Co-Parenting Teens**: Learn how to parent teens together.

June 15 at 1 PM: **Labeling Strong Feelings**: Help children understand how they feel by teaching them the right words for their feelings.

### July 2023

July 6 at 7 PM: **Helping Children with Strong Emotions**: Learn ways to help children process strong emotions.

July 20 at 1 PM: **Empathizing with Strong Feelings**: Feel closer to your child by learning how to show your child you understand what they are going through.

### August 2023

August 10 at 7 PM: **We COPE: Managing your Stress**: Learn ways to keep yourself healthy by taking care of yourself.

August 17 at 1 PM: **Problem Solving Through Strong Feelings**: Learn how to problem solve with children when they have strong feelings.

