

Maryland Laws: Neglect and Unattended Children

Neglect

Maryland Family Law §5-701- states that "NEGLECT" means the leaving of a child unattended or other failure to give proper care and attention to a child by a parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for supervision of the child under circumstances that indicate:

1. that the child's health or welfare is harmed or placed at substantial risk of harm; or
2. mental injury to the child or a substantial risk of mental injury.



Unattended Children

Maryland Family Law §5-801-states that

(a) A person who is charged with the care of a child under the age of 8 years may not allow the child to be locked or confined in a dwelling, building, enclosure, or motor vehicle while the person charged is absent and the dwelling, building, enclosure, or motor vehicle is out of the sight of the person charged unless the person charged provides a reliable person at least 13 years old to remain with the child to protect the child.

(b) A person who violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction is subject to a fine not exceeding \$500 or imprisonment not exceeding 30 days, or both.



You can find these laws by going to the following web site.

www.dsd.state.md.us

Guidelines for Parents

What children need to know

- What to do in case of an emergency, accident or illness.
- Your work and cell phone numbers; how to call 911; and how to give their correct address.

Planning for your Child's Safety

Leaving your 8+ year-old child alone for short periods of time requires serious consideration and sound judgment.

Here are some things to consider when planning for your child's safety:

- Is your child trustworthy and responsible?
- Does your child have special needs?
- Does your child feel comfortable being left alone?
- Does your child understand the family safety plan?
- Try a "test run"...when you are home, have the 13+ year-old practice supervision of a younger child.
- Avoid leaving your child with extra responsibilities like cooking and cleaning.
- Secure household chemicals, matches and medicines.
- Establish rules for answering the door and allowing friends to visit.
- Avoid leaving a 13+ year-old with an infant when they are supervising other children.



Child Protective Services May Become Involved



- When a child is left overnight or home alone during the day under circumstances that places the child at substantial risk of harm. Every child has different abilities and needs. Each situation is different. Parents of all children are expected to make safe and appropriate plans for their child's care and supervision.
- When a parent or caregiver does not plan for safety.

Make sure your child has Emergency Contact Numbers

Police	911
Fire Department	911
Medical Emergencies	911
Poison Control	1-800-222-1222
Emergency Contact Number	_____

Remember...the age of your child is only one of many factors that you should consider in determining when to leave your child alone.



For more information visit the following web site.

www.montgomerycountymd.gov

Know the Buzz



Protect yourself and your children!
Know and follow the Maryland Law.

Staff are available to answer your specific questions about leaving children unattended. There are also other parenting brochures available upon request.

For inquiries, call
Montgomery County
Department of Health and Human Services
Child Welfare Services

240-777-4417



Montgomery County
Department of Health and Human Services
Child Welfare Services
A Partnership with Maryland
Department of Human Resources
1301 Piccard Drive
Rockville, MD 20850



www.montgomerycountymd.gov

What's the Buzz?

When can your child be left alone?



What you need to know!

In response to many calls and inquiries, this brochure is intended to inform parents about Maryland Family Law requirements to prevent accidents and tragedies caused by "SUPERVISION NEGLECT."

Montgomery County
Department of Health and Human Services
Child Welfare Services
1301 Piccard Drive 3rd Floor
Rockville, MD 20850