

Safety in Self-Care

10-11 Year Olds

Day 1 of 3

Objectives

To teach children how to answer the telephone when they are alone or with siblings when their parents are unavailable.

To teach message-taking.

To introduce the concept of boredom as a lack of making choices.

To discuss alternatives to boredom.

Introduction for adult

Research indicates that nearly half of the children in this age group are left at home alone at least occasionally. The issue is no longer whether they are left alone, but rather how to teach them to feel safer and be safer when they are alone or with pre-adolescent siblings.

These lessons are designed to give children skills and increase their sense of ease with their situation, whatever it is, and to give them ways to judge when they need help and how to get it.

Even for those children who are not left alone, there are times when mom or dad can't get to the telephone or to the door so these skills really do apply to all children.

Remember, role-playing is acting out so children learn the skill, not just the concept.

Introduction for child

Many kids stay by themselves these days. Even if you don't, there are times when we may not be available and you need to answer the telephone. Today we're going to learn some skills for doing that.

Watch video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TB_2VqAkupE&t=7s

Role-play

How do you feel when you are home alone, even for a little while? Do you like it? Do you worry about it? When you're by yourself and the phone rings, I want you to answer it. There are three reasons why:

1. If there is an emergency, we want to be able to get in touch with you. For example, if I was going to be late coming home, I would want to let you know so you don't worry.
2. You need to let the person calling know that someone is home.
3. If you don't answer the phone, you may worry or feel afraid. We want you to be in charge, so you don't have to worry.

If you're home alone, and the person calling asks to talk to mom or dad, your answer should be "She (or he) is busy. May I take a message?"

As soon as you say, "May I take a message," you're in charge of the phone call. You should ask twice if there is any message.

If the person calling doesn't want to leave a message, you may hang up the phone. Let's practice.

RP: "Ring, ring, is your mother there?"

Children frequently respond with, "No, she's busy." Point out that they just told the caller that mother isn't home. "She's busy" or "she can't come to the phone right now" is preferable.

The Correct response is: "She's busy. May I take a message."

"No, this won't take long. I only have one thing to say to her."

Correct response of child: "I'm sorry. She's busy. May I take a message?"

"Well, all right. This is (give name). I just called to see if she is going to the meeting tonight. Tell her to call me please."

RP: "Ring, ring. Hi, is your mom there?"

Correct answer: "She's busy. May I take a message?"

"No. Let me just talk to your dad then."

Correct answer: "He can't come to the phone now. May I take a message?"

"Listen, just get one of your parents on the phone. I don't care which one I talk to, but I'm not going to give you the message."

Would it be all right to hang up? Yes, you have my permission to hang up if someone refuses to leave a message.

RP: "Ring, ring. Hello, this is ABC Grocery. We're calling to see what kind of peanut-butter your family uses."

Correct response is "I'm not interested," and hang up the phone.

RP: "Ring, ring. Hello, this is the Census Bureau. We're calling to see how many people under the age of eighteen are in your family."

Correct response is "May I take a message" or "Please call back later." Children should know not to give anyone information over the phone. They should not be intimidated.

RP: "Ring, ring. Hello! You're the lucky winner of a brand new computer if you can tell me how many people are in your house right now and what their ages are. Hurry! You've got 30 seconds to answer that question to be a winner!"

Correct response is "I'm not interested," and hang up.

Should you give family information out over the phone?

Absolutely not.

RP: "Ring, ring. Hi, who's this?"

Most children are very quick to respond by giving their name. Practice this for automaticity.

Instead of giving the person your name, you could say, "Who's calling?"

Let's try again: "Ring, ring. Hi, who's this?"

This time they will respond by asking, "Who are you calling?"

"I'm calling you. What's your name?"

Do this in an engaging voice and keep trying to engage your child in conversation until they hang up. For example, ask "how old are you?" "Are you all alone?"

If you got a call that scared you, who would you call?

Do you have telephone numbers for our neighbors, friends and relatives? What about our work numbers?

What would you say when you called me?

So, if you called me and got the help you needed with this problem, who would be in control then? You or your fear?

With all of this practice, do you think you would feel comfortable answering the phone?

Boredom

Another problem that kids often talk about when they stay by themselves is feeling bored. Does that ever happen to you?

How could plan your time so you would enjoy being by yourself more?

Do you think feeling bored might come from not making choices, from needing other people to make your choices for you?

What are some choices that you could make when you are feeling bored?

Discuss their choices: TV, homework, read, electronic games, etc.

If you practice doing something, almost anything when you feel bored, you'll find that you forget that you are bored.