



Nathan Deal, Governor

Clyde L. Reese, III, Esq., Commissioner

Georgia Department of Human Services • Cherokee Family & Children Services • D'Anna K. Liber, Director  
P. O. Box 826, 105 Lamar Haley Parkway • Canton, GA 30169 • Phone (770) 720-3610 • Fax (770) 720-3680

## **Lack of Supervision Guidelines**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

Many individuals have questions regarding at what age children may be left unsupervised. While there are no State laws regarding the supervision of children, DFCS has guidelines which we follow. The State guidelines are as follows:

- Children eight years or younger should not be left alone
- Children between the ages of nine years and twelve years, based on level of maturity, may be left alone for brief (less than two hours) periods of time; and,
- Children thirteen years and older, who are at an adequate level of maturity, may be left alone and may perform the role of babysitter, as authorized by the parent, for up to twelve hours.

**These guidelines pertain only to children who are not in the Department's custody. Situations involving children for whom the department has placement responsibility are governed by foster care requirements.**

**There are sometimes circumstances where an unsupervised older child is at risk or where a younger child has the maturity level to be left alone or to care for other children. Some examples are:**

- It may not be advisable to leave an older child who has a special condition or disability alone.
- Consideration may be given to a child younger than 13 years, who exhibits strong maturity skills and has participated in a course on babysitting, to be alone or to care for other children. Suggested questions to ask are:
  - Does the child know the emergency plan for the family?
  - Does the child know the parent's phone numbers (work and home)?
  - Can the child demonstrate the plan and recite the numbers?
  - What is the availability of the parent during this time?
  - Are there environmental factors that add further risk to the situation?
  - Are there factors that reduce risk, i.e. supportive/available neighbors?

**If you have questions and want to talk to the local Cherokee DFCS Office, please call 770-720-3610.**

Aging Services | Child Support Services | Family & Children Services | Residential Child Care

*An Equal Opportunity Employer*