

Waterloo Fire Rescue Fire PALS Injury Prevention Program

Latchkey Children Safety

Grades 2 – 5

To educate the student to recognize skills necessary for them to feel and stay safe while home alone.

Learning Objectives:

At the completion of this unit, 90% of the students will be able to:

1. define latchkey
2. recite basic personal safety information
3. demonstrate what to do when coming home to an empty house
4. identify four skills they can do to avoid stranger dangers
5. differentiate between an emergency in the home or to themselves versus a fixable problem

Time Element:

Knowledge/Attitude: 20 minutes

Activity/Skill: 10 minutes

Materials:

Latchkey Children Safety Power Point Presentation (can be found on the Fire PALS website), Important Information for Latchkey Children Sheet (1 per student, printed on heavier card stock paper-pick these up in the Fire PALS office)

Introduction/Knowledge: 20 minutes

Over 50% of all school age children are home alone, either before or after school for an average of 30 minutes each day. We will talk today about skills that will help you deal with any fears or anxieties you may have while home alone.

I. Define Latchkey

- A. Regularly left alone to supervise themselves
- B. Ask, “Is anyone here a latchkey child?” Have students raise hands.
- C. Being latchkey often carries with it anxiety and fears.
 - strangers
 - parents not home on-time
 - boredom

II. Basic information which alleviate anxieties

A. Review of things they already know

1. address and phone number
2. parents full names
3. emergency phone number – 9 – 1 – 1
 - Cool a burn with cold water
 - Stop, Drop and Roll
 - Home escape plan – two ways out
 - Crawl low in smoke

B. New information to teach the children

1. important phone numbers
2. parent's work location and phone number
3. contact person – neighbor, relative, friend for boring times
4. when to call 9 – 1 – 1
5. what is an emergency
6. keep small amount of money in reserve – pay phone, need milk

III. Special Concerns for Latchkey Children

A. Coming home to empty house

1. Go straight home.
2. Have your own key – pin inside pocket, chained around neck.
3. Do not put address or name on key.
4. Do not give key to friend.
5. Have hidden key at house.
 - Do not retrieve when others are watching.
 - Don't hide it under a doormat.
6. Leave a spare key at neighbors house.
 - Do not go in if house looks funny.
 - Door ajar, window broken
 - Go to neighbors and phone contact person.
7. Lock door after you get home, call parent or contact person to tell of your safe arrival home.

B. Stranger Danger

1. Do not let anyone in house when alone.
2. Not even friends without prior parent permission
3. Tell phone callers, "Parents can not come to the phone right now."
4. If someone tries to force way into house:
 - make noise

- turn up TV
 - have “safe room” that can be locked and has phone.
Call 9-1-1
5. If someone unexpectedly tries to pick you up from school
- prearrange with parents a code word that ensures permission
 - never get into a car with a stranger or person that does not know the code word
6. If lonely, bored or scared:
- call contact person or friend
7. lots of reasons for parents being late
- car breakdown, work late, stop at store

IV. What ifs – Questions and Answer session

- Lights go out
 1. Flashlight
 2. No candles
 3. Learn about breaker box with parent’s help.
- Plumbing leak
 1. Learn about shut-offs with parent’s help.
 2. Call contact person or 9 – 1 – 1 if bad leak.
- Smell smoke, natural gas or hear smoke detector alarms
 1. Leave house immediately.
 2. Call 9 – 1 – 1 from neighbors.
- Burn hand on toaster
 1. Cool with water.
- Cut finger with knife while preparing food
 1. Pressure and band-aid
 2. More serious burns or injuries
 - a. Call 9 – 1 – 1 or contact person

V. Demonstration/Skill Development - 10 minutes

Role-play review – Empty house and stranger danger including emergency vs. non-emergency.

VI. Activity

Have the students fill out the Important Information for Latchkey Children sheets and tell them to post it on the refrigerator or near the phone.

VII. Journal

Have the students respond to one of the following journal prompts:

- I stay safe when I am home alone by...
- If I am approached by a stranger...

Summary

Reinforce it is ok and common to be afraid when alone, but this information can help you.

Home / School Connection

Letter home to parents explaining the day's lesson and helpful tips for them to help their children deal with being home alone.

Art Connection for 2nd and 3rd grade

Practice Safety coloring sheet: *student handbook*