

# Kids And Safety: How To Teach Your Child About Your Home Alarm System

*Good safety and home security habits should start at a young age.*

As your children get a bit older and need to stay home alone at times, you'll need to teach them how to operate your home security system. Parents are sometimes reluctant to have discussions about safety and home security for fear of scaring the kids; however, it's possible to teach effective home security skills without instilling unnecessary fear in your children. Here are some ways you can help your kids develop good safety habits in the home.

## Prevent False Alarms

If your child is old enough to be home alone after school, he or she will need to know how to disarm your home alarm system. Teach your child the security code needed to disarm the system and practice entering the code together. Taking the time to review this process will drastically reduce the the risk of false alarms. While most home security false alarms are nothing more than a nuisance, they can occasionally be costly to homeowners: Some towns and municipalities have begun imposing fees for responding to false alarms. In the event that your child enters the security code incorrectly and is contacted by a monitoring agent, be sure to practice what to say to let the agent know that no help needs to be sent.

## Be Ready for an Emergency

Another good reason to teach your kids about your home alarm system is to make sure they're ready to act in the event of an emergency. When children are home alone after school, this type of preparation is critical to their safety. If a break-in or a fire occurs, it's important that your child knows how to use the security system to call for help. Teach your children how to activate the alarm so that they can be contacted by a representative from the central monitoring system. This skill can even come in handy if a child is home with an adult who suffers an injury or other health emergency. In a situation where every minute counts, a child's ability to get help immediately can make all the difference.

## Make Safety a Family Affair

Alarm systems aren't the only home security topic you should discuss with your children; it's equally important to review and discuss many other essential safety skills. For example, kids should be taught not to reveal that their parents are out if they answer the phone or the door. Role-playing games can help you and your kids practice what to say and do in each of these situations.

If your kids are old enough to be on social media, a similar set of rules applies: A child shouldn't advertise that they're home alone on social media or discuss an upcoming family vacation that would alert potential burglars of a vacant house. Your family should also work together to create an emergency plan for situations like fires, home invasions, and natural disasters. Make sure each member of the family knows the quickest way out of the house and where they would meet the rest of the family outside. Review which essential items you would grab before escaping. Some of this preparation may seem excessive, but regular practice will keep both kids and adults from panicking if a real disaster ever occurs.

## **Determining the Right Age**

Every child is different, so it's difficult to name a specific age when a child should be ready to learn about their home's security system. The child needs to be responsible enough to follow directions and mature enough to understand that the security code is private information and should never be shared with anyone. As a rule, a child who is old enough to stay home without adult supervision should be able to manage their home's security system.

You don't have to wait until your children are old enough to stay home by themselves to teach them the basics about alarm systems and home security. A young child may not be ready to operate your home alarm system without supervision, but they can certainly learn rules about answering the door or the phone, and they can participate in family emergency drills. It's never too soon to teach your children these valuable security concepts. Take the time and put in the effort to make sure your children stay safe.