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## Child Care Options - Self Care

General characteristics of self care:

- When a child takes care of herself in her own home
- Not a licensed form of care
- There is no specific age in New York State for a child to be in self care. You must consider the maturity level of each child and if you, as a parent feel comfortable with your child being home alone.
- Consider safety issues as you decide whether self care is appropriate for your child.

## Considerations in Whether Self Care is Appropriate for your Child

Deciding whether or not your child is ready to care for herself at home alone involves issues of safety, maturity and trust. Only you and your child know if and when she is ready for self care. Important considerations include:

- Your child's age, emotional maturity and responsibility level
- How comfortable your child is with self care
- Whether your child will be caring for a younger sibling, and the younger sibling's needs and responsibility level
- Her knowledge of safety rules and ability to respond well to an emergency
- Have you established a procedure with your child when she enters the home alone? Can she call you at work to check-in or does she check-in with a neighbor?
- Does your child know what steps to take should an emergency occur?
- What will your child do if strangers come to the door?
- Do you have a neighbor that your child can contact when home alone?
- Can you be reached easily during the day?
- For how many hours will your child be home alone?
- Are there alternatives, such as Boys and Girls' Club, scouting or other after-school activities, a neighbor's home, or other supervised settings where your child could receive care?