

13 JUNE 2000



Services

CHILD SUPERVISION POLICIES

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Pages: 6/Distribution: F

This instruction establishes guidelines for acceptable supervision of unattended children on Maxwell AFB and Gunter Annex. This includes establishing age-specific guidance to assist families in knowing what is considered acceptable and unacceptable supervision. This instruction applies to all organizations and tenants assigned or attached to Maxwell AFB and Gunter Annex.

1. General. Determining the age children may be left unsupervised is difficult due to the individual levels of maturity and responsibility among children of any given age group. Unattended children pose a safety risk not only to themselves, but also to other base residents when not properly supervised. Sponsors are ultimately held responsible for the conduct and well-being of their children on base; however, the following guidance serves as the policy for Maxwell AFB and Gunter Annex.

2. References.

2.1. DoDI 6060.3, *School-Age Care Program*

2.2. AETC Policy Letter, Youth Supervision Policy, 01 November 1998

2.3. Inadequate Supervision Guide, Montgomery County Department of Human Resources

3. Responsibilities.

3.1. The Installation Commander establishes and ensures compliance with this policy.

3.2. Security Forces personnel become familiar with and enforce this policy, as applicable.

3.3. Sponsors comply with base policies regarding unattended children.

4. Supervision Arrangements. Parents are encouraged to make full use of the child development centers, youth centers, and family child care homes on base as much as possible to provide supervision for their minor children during the workday. Arrangements with neighbors for care of children must be limited to 10 hours per week. Persons providing childcare in excess of 10 hours per week, whether paid or unpaid, require licensing by the Support Group Commander through the base family childcare coordinator.

5. Lack of Supervision. Lack of supervision may be considered child neglect. Each report of alleged child neglect is reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Family Advocacy Officer and Family Maltreatment Case Management Team. Each report is to consider the unique circumstances surrounding the allegation. Substantiated violations are reviewed by the sponsor's chain of command for possible

action. Attachment 1 provides a list of questions and issues that can be used as guidelines for base agencies to use in their assessment of when it is appropriate for a child to be left unsupervised once an allegation has been received.

6. Age Requirements.

6.1. Children 6 years of age (prior to their 7th birthday) and younger must be in the “line of sight” of the caretaker or in a controlled environment; for example, fenced back yard when out of doors. Children under the age of 7 should be accompanied at all times. They should never be left in vehicles unattended or at home alone. They should not be allowed to ride a bicycle or tricycle, or walk around the base without direct “line of sight” supervision of an adult or age appropriate baby-sitter.

6.2. Children ages 7–9 may not be left unsupervised in the home. Children ages 7 and older should know the family’s safety plan and have access to a responsible adult in the case of an emergency. They may be allowed outside unattended (to play on the playgrounds, ride their bicycle, etc.) Children these ages may be allowed to walk to and from school. They must also be able to demonstrate an appropriate level of maturity and be in no obvious threat of harm to themselves or others. They must never be placed in a caretaker role for younger children, including siblings.

6.3. Children age 9 may be left in a car unattended, except in hot weather, for a maximum of 15 minutes. Keys must be removed and the handbrake must be applied. Children in this age group should understand and be able to demonstrate the rules of safety when riding a bicycle or crossing the streets without supervision (this would include going to or from school).

6.4. Children ages 10–12 may be left unsupervised for up to 3 hours during the day with ready access (phone number) to a responsible adult, but not between the hours of 2200–0600. These children may be left unattended in a car (except in hot weather) with the keys removed and the hand brake applied. They must be capable of showing an appropriate level of maturity and understanding of the safety issues listed in attachment 2. These children should not have any special medical or educational needs and the child/children must be comfortable with the situation.

6.5. Children ages 13–15 may be left unsupervised for up to 8 hours, but not overnight, providing they are not at risk of harm to themselves or others. Under no circumstances are children under the age of 15 to be left alone for longer than 8 hours.

6.6. Children ages 16–17 may be left alone for no more than 24 hours at a time. Necessary provisions and an alternate authorized adult should be available to assist with problems and to make periodic checks.

6.7. Attachment 2 provides a list of questions parents can use as a general guideline to help them assess their child’s readiness to be left unattended.

7. Curfew. Curfew for on-base children ages 13–17 is 2300, Sunday through Saturday. Children must obey base rules at all times.

8. Latch-Key Program. Completion of Latch-Key Program, by Family Support Center, is required for children ages 10 and older who are left unsupervised. Having your child complete the Latch-Key Program on base would provide an extra measure of insurance towards the safety and well being of an

unattended child. These children must be able to demonstrate an appropriate level of maturity and be in no obvious threat of harm to themselves or others.

9. Baby-Sitting. Completion of Red Cross baby-sitting training is highly recommended for children who care for siblings. It is required for ages 13 and older who baby-sit non-family members.

9.1. Children ages 10 and under and not yet in sixth grade should never be placed in a caretaker role for younger children, including siblings, under any circumstances.

9.2. Children ages 11–12 may provide short-term childcare for siblings over 3 years old, not exceed 3 hours in duration. They may not care for non-family members.

9.3. Children ages 13–15 may baby-sit for siblings and non-family members, not to exceed 8 hours and not “overnight.” Completion of the Red Cross baby-sitting training for those providing childcare to non-family members is required. For those caring for family members, it is strongly recommended.

9.4. Children ages 16 and older may baby-sit for siblings and non-family members for periods in excess of 8 hours, to include overnight.

10. See attachment 3 as a quick reference to Child Supervision policies.

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Attachments

1. Base Personnel Guide to Assessing Unsupervised Children
2. Parent’s Guide to Unsupervised Children
3. Child Supervision Matrix

**BASE PERSONNEL GUIDE
TO ASSESSING UNSUPERVISED CHILDREN**

A1.1. The following suggestions are for base agencies to use in order to assess whether a child is at risk for harm. These suggestions do NOT constitute additional policy.

A1.2. If you observe a child under 7 years of age who is without "line of sight" adult supervision, or a child 7 years or older who is acting in a manner that you believe places the child at risk of harm to himself or herself or others, you must contact the Security Forces Squadron (SFS) at 953-7222 (Maxwell)/416-4250 (Gunter) (or 911 in an emergency situation.)

A1.3. Questions that would be helpful in assessing the issue of neglect are as follows:

A1.3.1. What is the age of the child?

A1.3.2. What is the duration or frequency of time without adult supervision? When was the last time the parents called to check in on the child?

A1.3.3. Is there presence of physical or emotionally handicapping conditions?

A1.3.4. Is the child able to tell you his/her name, address, phone number? Can he/she tell you the name of his/her parents and where they are? When are they expected home?

A1.3.5. Is the child afraid of being alone?

A1.3.6. Does the child have the name, address, and number of another adult who can be contacted for assistance?

A1.3.7. Is that adult available?

A1.3.8. Does the child know and understand what to do in an emergency? Does the child know what constitutes an emergency?

A1.3.9. Have there been recent incidents of neglect involving the family?

A1.3.10. Does the child appear to be mature, verbal and have a good judgment as compared to other children of the same age or grade?

A1.3.11. If the child is seven or older, does he/she have a key to the home? Can he or she use it to get inside?

A1.3.12. Does the child know what to do if a stranger calls on the phone, comes to the door, or approaches him or her outside?

A1.3.13. Is the child 9 years or younger inside a locked car with dangerous weather conditions such as high temperature?

A1.3.14. Is the child using good road safety when riding a bicycle or walking?

A1.3.15. Does the child know how/when to use 911 emergency procedures?

A1.4. This is not a comprehensive list, but should help to determine issues of safety involving children. It is everyone's job to protect our children. If you have any questions or comments, please call the Family Advocacy Office at 953-5501.

PARENT'S GUIDE TO UNSUPERVISED CHILDREN

A2.1. The following is general guideline for all parents to use when they are teaching their children safety as they try to assess the readiness of their child (children) to be left unsupervised:

A2.1.1. Does your child consistently act as mature or as responsible as the majority of children in his/her grade at school?

A2.1.2. Has your child acted impulsively in the past several weeks in a way that has placed him/her in danger (e.g., playing with fire or sharp objects, getting into the medicine cabinet without your permission, using the stove without permission, starting the lawnmower or power tools without permission)?

A2.1.3. Is your child able to recite his/her name, address, and phone number to another adult if necessary?

A2.1.4. Does your child know your name, phone number and unit/squadron?

A2.1.5. Does your child know how to contact emergency services? Does he or she know what an emergency is?

A2.1.6. Does your know the name, phone number and address of a designated alternative if you are not available? Is he/she comfortable asking this alternative caretaker for help?

A2.1.7. Does your child know how to exit your home from every room in case of a fire?

A2.1.8. Does your child know where to go in case of a tornado? (In a center room—a bathroom or closet without windows and cover up with pillows or bedding.)

A2.1.9. Can he or she make a simple sandwich (peanut butter and jelly, for instance) and pour a glass of milk or a bowl of cold cereal?

A2.1.10. Does your child know the rules about bicycle safety and does he or she use a helmet without your reminding him or her?

A2.1.11. How will your child handle a stranger calling on the phone or knocking on the door?

A2.2. This is not intended to be either a comprehensive list or to take the place of good parental teaching and judgment. It is simply a tool to help you do the best job you can do in the most difficult (and rewarding) role you will ever have—being a parent. If you have questions or comments, please call the Family Advocacy Office at 953-5501.

CHILD SUPERVISION MATRIX

AGE OF CHILD	LEFT ALONE IN QUARTERS FOR 3 HRS OR LESS	LEFT ALONE FOR MORE THAN 3 HRS	LEFT ALONE OVER-NIGHT	OUTSIDE UNATTENDED (TO INCLUDE PLAYING)	LEFT IN CAR UNATTENDED	CHILD BABY-SITTING FOR SIBLINGS	CHILD BABY-SITTING FOR OTHERS
Newborn through age 4	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Ages 5 through age 6	NO	NO; except at age 6 may walk to and from school	NO	YES; playground or yard with immediate access (visual sight or hearing distance)***	NO	NO	NO
Ages 7 through age 9	NO	NO; except may walk to and from school	NO	YES; with access to adult supervision***	YES; Children age 9 only, may be left for 15 min. max with keys removed and handbrake applied	NO	NO
Ages 10 through age 12	YES; with ready access (phone number to an adult supervisor) */***	NO	NO	YES	YES; keys removed and handbrake applied	YES; 11 yrs old or sixth grade minimum */***	NO
Ages 13 through age 15	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES**
Age 16 through high school graduation	YES	YES	YES; minors age 16 & 17 may be left alone for TDYs or leaves not to exceed 48 hours. Adult supervision should be available to make periodic checks.	YES	YES	YES	YES

* Latch Key Program Training by Family Support Ctr required

** Red Cross babysitting training required

***Adult supervision is defined as someone who has or assumes responsibilities for the child, e.g., parent