



I've Got the House!

Classroom Guide

For the first time on your own — you're more ready than you think

CASEL Competency: Responsible Decision-Making

Grade Level: 1st–4th

Duration: 40–50 minutes

Category: Safety Magic

Learning Objectives

- Know the rules: don't open the door, don't tell anyone you're alone, know emergency numbers
- Practice handling common situations: doorbell, phone, strange noise
- Understand the difference between an emergency and a non-emergency
- Build confidence in personal capability and problem-solving

Overview & Preparation

Key Vocabulary

Responsible • Emergency • Non-emergency • Locked • Contact • 911 • Check-in • Capable • Plan • Routine

Materials Needed

- The personalized story
- Emergency number cards
- Play phone
- Scenario cards
- Paper and crayons

Before Reading

Connection Question

Have you ever been home without a grown-up? How did it feel? What rules did you follow?

Background Building

The hero's parent leaves and the door locks behind them. First time alone! It feels big and quiet and a little scary. But the hero has a PLAN: the door stays locked, nobody finds out they're alone, emergency numbers are by the phone, and the parent checks in by calling. When the doorbell rings — don't answer. When a noise happens — investigate safely. And when the parent returns? PRIDE. "I've got the house!"

During Reading — Pause Points

- **When the parent leaves and the house feels big and empty** — The house feels different when you're alone. Is it the house that changed, or just how it FEELS? What would help the hero feel safe?
- **When the doorbell rings and the hero doesn't answer** — Someone's at the door! The hero doesn't open it. Why is this the right choice? What if it's someone they know?
- **When the parent calls to check in** — The parent called! How does the hero feel? Why is the check-in phone call so important?

Discussion Questions

1. The hero's number one rule: don't open the door. Why is this important even if the person seems friendly?

↳ What would you do if someone said "Your mom sent me to get you"?

2. The hero doesn't tell ANYONE they're alone. Why is this a safety rule?

↳ What should you say if someone calls and asks for your parent? ("They're busy right now.")

3. What's the difference between an emergency (fire, someone hurt) and a non-emergency (doorbell, weird noise)?

↳ When do you call 911? When do you call your parent?

4. The hero felt PROUD when the parent came back. Why is being responsible a powerful feeling?

↳ What other grown-up things are you ready for?

Facilitation Tips

This lesson is for slightly older children (1st-4th grade). Be sensitive: some children are left alone by necessity, not choice. Frame the lesson as EMPOWERING, not scary. The goal is confidence and preparedness.

Emotional Payoff

The big empty house transforms from intimidating to manageable. The hero proves they're CAPABLE — not because nothing happened, but because they handled everything that did. "I've got the house!" becomes a badge of growing up.

After Reading Activities

What Would You Do? Scenarios

Duration: 15 min | Materials: Scenario cards

Draw scenarios: "The doorbell rings." "You hear a loud noise." "The power goes out." "Someone calls and asks for your parent." "You smell something burning." For each, discuss: Is this an emergency? What do you do? Practice responses.

Emergency Number Practice

Duration: 10 min | Materials: Play phones, emergency cards

Practice calling: 911 ("There's a fire at [address]"), parent's cell (check-in), neighbor ("Can you come over? I need help"). Know the difference between when to call each one.

Home Alone Safety Plan

Duration: 10 min | Materials: Plan template, pencils

Create a personal safety plan: emergency numbers, neighbor's name, what to do for doorbell/phone/noise/emergency. Take this home and post it near the phone. This is REAL preparation.

Writing Prompts

- Write your own "Home Alone" rules. What are the 5 most important things to remember?
- Draw the moment the hero felt proudest. Why was that moment important?
- Write about what it means to be "responsible enough" to be trusted.

Home Connection

Family Letter

Dear Families,

Today we practiced being home alone safely through "I've Got the House!" Your child learned: don't open the door, don't tell anyone you're alone, know your emergency numbers, and the difference between emergencies and non-emergencies. They created a safety plan — please review it together and post it at home.

Here is how you can continue this learning at home:

- Review the safety plan together. Add your specific numbers and neighbor contact.
- Do a practice run: leave for 10 minutes. Call to check in. Return and discuss how it went.
- Practice: "What would you say if someone knocked? If someone called?"

With warmth,

Your Child's Teacher

Related Books

- Latchkey Kids by Shannon Miller
- The Berenstain Bears Home Alone by Stan & Jan Berenstain
- Officer Buckle and Gloria by Peggy Rathmann