

Left unsupervised: A look at the most vulnerable children ^[1]

Author: Vandivere, S.; Tout, K., Capizzano, J. and Zaslow, M.

Source: Child Trends ^[2]

Format: Fact sheet

Publication Date: 5 May 2003

AVAILABILITY

Available in print for order (see SOURCE) and online for download.

Full research brief in pdf ^[3]

Excerpts from media advisory: Child Trends analyzed 1999 data from the National Survey of America's Families, a survey developed by Child Trends and the Urban Institute as part of the Assessing the New Federalism project, to look at two vulnerable groups - young school-age children and low-income children - to get a sense of how many children are "home alone." The findings from this analysis include: In 1999, 15 percent of 6- to 12-year olds were in self care. ("Self care" means the children either took care of themselves or stayed alone with a sibling age 12 or younger on a regular basis, even for a small amount of time). The actual numbers of children who are in self care may point to an unmet need for affordable or appropriate supervised care options. In 1999, 3.3 million 6- to 12-year olds regularly spent time alone or with a young sibling. (This number is probably conservative because some parents may not want to report that they leave their children alone.) Children in low-income families, in general, are slightly less likely to be in self care than children in higher-income households, especially when they are young. In 1999, 12 percent of 6- to 12-year olds in low-income families were in self care versus 17 percent in other families. Children with parents reporting symptoms of poor mental health are more likely to spend time unsupervised than children whose parents do not report mental health problems. Among 10- to 12-year olds, 32 percent of children with parents with mental health problems were left unsupervised versus 25 percent of children whose parents did not report mental health problems. Research finds that when children under 13 are regularly left unsupervised or to be cared for by young siblings, they may be at risk a variety of problems. Children in self care may be at increased risk for accidents and injuries, for social and behavior problems, and for academic and school adjustment problems.

Region: United States ^[4]

Tags: poverty ^[5]

availability ^[6]

school-age ^[7]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/03/06/left-unsupervised-look-most-vulnerable-children>

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/03/06/left-unsupervised-look-most-vulnerable-children> [2] <https://www.childtrends.org/>

[3] <https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2003/04/unsupervisedRB.pdf> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7865> [5]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/poverty> [6] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/availability> [7]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/school-age>