



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
MARINE CORPS LOGISTICS BASE
ALBANY, GEORGIA 31704-5000

BO 1710.31A
A720
8 Jun 01

BASE ORDER 1710.31A

From: Commanding Officer
To: Distribution List

Subj: CHILDREN IN SELF-CARE

1. Purpose. The purpose of this Order is to establish standardized guidelines concerning the minimum age at which children may be left in "self-care." This guidance is presented in the context that all parents are responsible and accountable for their children at all times.

2. Cancellation. BO 1710.31

3. Background

a. Questions concerning the appropriate age at which a child may be left in self-care often arise. Concerns at that point are frequently a direct result of an allegation of child neglect or improper parenting.

b. There are no set standards established by the Department of Defense and standards in civilian communities vary based upon local regulations. Within the state of Georgia there are no age directed requirements.

4. Definitions

a. Baby-sitting. An agreement to care for another's child or a sibling on an occasional basis, defined as less than 10 child care hours per week, either in the sitter's or the child's home.

b. Parent. The biological father or mother of a child; a person who, by order of a court of competent jurisdiction, has been declared the father or mother of a child by adoption; the legal guardian of a child; or a person in whose household a child resides, provided that such person stands in loco parentis to that child.

c. Caretaker. An individual designated by the parent to watch, guard, oversee the care and welfare of their child.

d. Self-care. Care when the child is responsible for himself or herself and generally includes children who are responsible for themselves before or after school, during school vacations, and holidays.

5. Policy

a. Parents are responsible and accountable for their children at all times. Parents, guardians or designated caretakers of children are expected to have full accountability of their children to ensure they are safe and not left without direct accountable supervision, age appropriate, for any period of time. This includes such situations as being unattended in quarters, left alone overnight, participation in self-release programs, unattended in vehicles, unattended on playgrounds, and all other areas aboard Base.

b. Several important variables, in addition to age, must be considered before parents decide their children can safely be left in self-care. The factors include maturity of the child; duration and frequency of time without direct supervision; child's knowledge of emergency procedures; presence of physically and emotionally handicapping conditions; accessibility to parent or other specified or informed caretaker; number and ages of other children present without direct adult supervision; age appropriateness of responsibilities given to the child; and specific nature of ongoing child activities while unsupervised.

c. When a child is discovered unsupervised, the factors will be closely considered. When a reasonable suspicion exists that the responsible adult(s) did not properly consider and apply these relevant factors, the Provost Marshal's Office will be notified. In appropriate cases the child/children may be taken into custody, the sponsoring parents will be cited and his/her Commanding Officer will be notified.

d. All children in self-care must receive self-care instructions to include emergency procedures and phone numbers.

e. Children baby-sitting other children in Base housing are required to first complete the American Red Cross Baby Sitters Course.

f. The following chart outlines the minimum ages, based on developmental standards and the factors addressed above that may be left in self-care under certain circumstances.

AGE	UNATTENDED IN QUARTERS	LEFT ALONE OVERNIGHT	PLAYGROUND UNATTENDED	SELF RELEASE YOUTH CENTER
0 - 9	NO	NO	NO	NO
10 - 11	YES	NO	YES	YES
12 - 13	YES	NO	YES	YES
14 - 15	YES	NO	YES	YES
16 - 17	YES	YES	YES	YES

AGE	CAR UNATTENDED	BABY-SIT SIBLINGS	BABY-SIT OTHERS	BABY-SIT OTHERS OVERNIGHT
0 - 9	NO	NO	NO	NO
10 - 11	YES	NO	NO	NO
12 - 13	YES	YES @	YES *	NO
14 - 15	YES	YES @	YES *	NO
16 - 17	YES	YES	YES *	NO

* Must be American Red Cross certified.

@ No overnight

6. Applicability. This order is applicable to all service members, family members and DoD civilians aboard MCLB.

C. V. Mugno
C. V. MUGNO

DISTRIBUTION: B
PS (20)