Building Strong Families

When the Telephone Rings

Keep safety in mind when answering the phone

Sometimes when you are home alone, the telephone rings. Talk with your parents about how you should handle telephone calls. If you have to answer the telephone, try to remember the following:

- Answer the phone pleasantly.
- DO NOT give your name, phone number, or address.
- Never say that you are alone.
- If the caller wants to speak to your parents, say that your parents can’t come to the phone right now.
- If the caller asks, "What is your phone number?" you should ask, "What number did you call?"
- Take a message - the name and phone number of the caller. Do not give your parents' phone numbers at work.
- If the same person calls more than once and says that it is important, and you are not sure what to do, hang up and call your parent or contact person.
- A "prank call" is a telephone call where someone calls and tries to play a joke or tease you or tries to scare or threaten you. If you get a "prank call," hang up right away and call your parent or contact person. Don't answer the phone or the door until your parent or contact person comes to the house.
- If you have an answering machine, you may want to leave it on to take the calls until your parents come home.

Note to parents:

The phone may be a lifeline for the bored or lonely child. If long conversations with friends are a problem, consider an additional phone service such as call waiting.