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:

- Be polite when you answer the phone.

- 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, “My 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. Write down the name and phone number of the caller. Do not give out your parents' work phone numbers.

- What if the same person calls more than once and says that it is important? If you are not sure what to do, hang up and call your parent or contact person. (A contact person is a friend, relative, or neighbor that you and your parents choose. You can call this person if you have problems or questions and can’t reach your parents.)
• A "prank call" is a telephone call in which the caller tries to play a joke, tease you, scare you, or threaten you. If a prank call scares you, 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 it to answer the phone instead of you. You can leave it on to take the calls until your parents come home.

Note to parents:

The telephone may be a lifeline for bored or lonely children. But what if children spend a lot of time on the phone? You may want to get another phone line or a phone service such as “call waiting.”