

# Is My Child Ready to Go Out Alone?

How to know, and how to prepare them...



As the summer holidays approach, children may want to spend more time outside and with this naturally comes more independence, which can be an anxious time for parents. This leaflet gives you a crash-course in how to know when they are ready, and how to best prepare them.

As your child gets older it's likely they'll want a bit more independence, and it is an important part of growing-up. Whether a short distance, or longer trips, going out without you is a natural step for them to take when the time is right. This leaflet will help you to work out when the time is right and how to keep them safe when they do.

**1**  
**RECOGNISING**  
How to make a decision about when is the right time to allow your child out alone.

**2**  
**PREPARING**  
Practical advice on how to best prepare your child for increasing independence.

**3**  
**GETTING ADVICE**  
Including national and local agencies.



**Child Accident Prevention Trust**  
Advice on aspects of personal safety.  
[capt.org.uk](http://capt.org.uk)



**Family Lives**  
For advice on all aspects of parenting, 24/7.  
**0808 800 2222**



**Child Protection in Sport Unit**  
Check your local club's procedures and seek advice.

[the cpsu.org.uk](http://the cpsu.org.uk)

## Recognising:

There is no legal age limit for a child being out alone, just as there is no legal limit for leaving a child home alone. A recent survey found the average age to let a child out to play on their own is 10.5 years - older for trips further away. It all depends on the level of freedom being considered.

### Think about:

- Where they want to go? Do you **both** know the area and any risks?
- Who with? Do you know the children involved? Do you know and can you speak to the families?
- What do they want to do? Expect transparency from your child and for them to stick to it - trust is vital.
- How far will they need to travel? Are you confident they could make the journey alone if they had to?
- Do they know what to do in an emergency? Have you talked about personal safety and responsibility?



## Preparing:

- Talk about the risks - what would they do?
- Set the boundaries and explain your concerns.
- Do a trial run - let them take the lead when you're out together and only correct them if they do something to put themselves at risk.
- Are they happy? Are they being pressurised to do more than they feel comfortable?
- Are you happy? You need to be satisfied they can make wise decisions alone. If not, it's your prerogative to say no.
- Give them a chance to shine - if they stick to your expectations, your confidence will grow.

## IS MY CHILD SAFE AT THEIR LOCAL CLUBS?

Clubs and groups offer your child the chance to try new things and build independence. But there are some things you should expect to know:

- Who is your point of contact? Have a name and a number. Could you share concerns with them and vice versa?
- You should have access to parent info, such as: Safeguarding Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Recruitment Procedures. If you don't - ask!
- For trips or 'away' matches, what is their procedure? How many adults are supervising? Does it include people that are first-aid trained?