House rules, family rules, YOUR rules – rules are an important part of staying safe while home alone. Since each family and situation is different, make sure you take the time to discuss – and write down – what the rules are in your home are prior to youth staying home alone. It can be helpful to make a family contract, which each member signs, agreeing to the rules – remember, rules should be consistent and fair. Having children give their input and help develop the rules can make them more successful.

Some of the areas your family rules should cover include:

- What to do when getting off the bus, what to do when you arrive home
- Answering the door while home alone
- Who is allowed in the home when home alone
- Are they allowed to cook?
- Use of the TV, Computer, etc. How long/when
- Going outside the home while home alone
- Homework rules
- Rules dealing with siblings – who’s in charge, what are everyone’s responsibilities
- Rules regarding pets or animals in the home
- Who can they tell they will be home alone?
- Internet safety rules
- What to do if there is an emergency in the home
- Whom the trusted contacts are (neighbors/friends)
- What the plan is if something in the house/outside the house looks unusual or suspicious.

Use the blank family contract to set up your own family rules, and keep a copy at home for youth to refer to when home alone. Discussing and setting consequences in the even that the rules are broken is also appropriate during this discussion.
On this date, ____________, the following family members met and decided upon these family rules, and sign below in agreement-