

It's My Life



It's My Life invites kids to share their feelings about the social, emotional, and physical issues that affect them. Show kids how to get to *It's My Life* from the Web site of your local PBS station. If the site is not linked to your local station's Web site, have children go to **pbskids.org**. On the pull-down menu for Choose a PBS Kids site, click on *It's My Life*. Then click go. Or simply type **pbskids.org/itsmylife** in the Web browser's address window.

Preview the homepage of *It's My Life* with the kids, noting the different sections. Draw attention to the **Vote Now!** and **You Said It** features. These are areas where kids can contribute to the content of the site and share ideas with other *It's My Life* users. Children can also send comments and questions by clicking on the **Write to Us** tab at the bottom of the homepage. Circulate as children explore the Web site, offering help as needed and expressing interest in their discoveries.

Projects

The project ideas below give children the opportunity to extend and personalize the ideas and information presented on *It's My Life*. Encourage kids to design and pursue their own projects as well, for example, writing an advice column, conducting a survey, etc.

Family: Home Alone

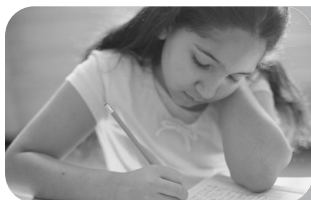
Invite children to explore the Home Alone topic in the **Family** section of the Web site. In particular, encourage children to check out the **Watch This** video, enter their opinion in the **Vote Now!** feature, and play the game, **You're in Charge**. (Follow the pathway below.) Afterwards, ask kids what they learned from playing this game.



You're in Charge

- From the *It's My Life* homepage, click on **Family**.
- In the pull-down menu under **Topics**, choose **Home Alone**.
- Under **Play It**, click on the title, **You're in Charge**.

Provide copies of the **Home Alone Journal Page** and the **Helpful Numbers** worksheet for children to complete. (These are available on the Web site. Follow the pathways below.)



Home Alone Journal Page

- From the *It's My Life* homepage, click on **Family**.
- Go to **Offline Activities**.
- Click on **Home Alone Journal Page**.



Helpful Numbers Worksheet

- From the *It's My Life* homepage, click on **Family**.
- In the pull-down menu under **Other Family Topics**, choose **Home Alone**.
- Under **Topics on Home Alone**, click on **Emergencies**.
- Click on **IML Helpful Numbers worksheet**.

Home Alone Surveys

Coming home alone is not a new phenomenon. For generations, kids have had to make dinner, take care of younger siblings, or do household chores by themselves when one or both parents worked. Being home alone can help kids develop responsibility, self-reliance, and a sense of contributing to the family. However, children who spend too many hours home alone can also get lonely, watch too much TV, or get into trouble.

Distribute and discuss the **Home Alone Survey Form** (page 10). Ask:

Who would you like to survey: other kids, parents, grandparents, or all three?

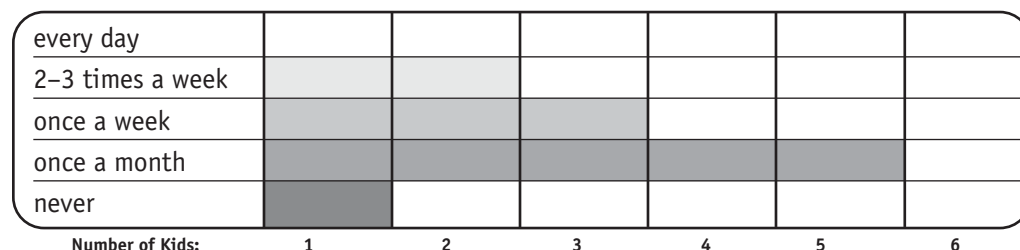
How do you think answers from parents or grandparents will differ from kids' answers?

You should feel free to add other questions to this survey.

Allow time for children to conduct the survey. Then reconvene to discuss how you will present the results. (There's lots of math thinking involved here!) One idea is to divide the surveys into groups according to whether the respondent was a kid, parent, or grandparent. You could make a bar graph for each age group's answer to questions #2 and #7. You could graph answers to questions #3 and #4 and add interesting comments from questions #5 and #6. (See sample graph below.)

Sample Graph: How often are you home alone after school?

Responses from kids, ages 7–10



Discuss what you discovered through the survey and graphs. Ask:

Did parents and grandparents have to stay home alone too when they were kids?

How was the experience different for the different generations?

Were there patterns that surprised you?

Who do you think might be interested in our survey results? How could we share them?

(through your group's newsletter or Web site; by displaying graphs in the school corridors or at the local library, etc.)

Home Alone Skits and Video

Kids can use humor and exaggeration to create instructional skits and videos about what kids should and shouldn't do when home alone. The activity sheet, **Home Alone Skits and Video** (page 11), walks them through the process, step by step. After kids create their skits or videos, ask:

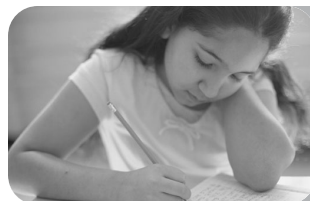
Who would you like to share your work with?

What message do you think the audience will get from your skit/video?

Why is this message important?

Friends: Bullying

Have children explore the Bullies topic in the Friends section of the *It's My Life* Web site. Encourage them to share their thoughts in the **You Said It** and **Vote Now!** features, check out the **Watch It** video, and play the game, **Beat the Bully**. (See the pathway below.) Afterwards, ask kids what they learned from playing this game.



Beat the Bully

- From the *It's My Life* homepage, click on **Friends**.
- In the pull-down menu under **Topics**, choose **Bullies**.
- Under **Play It**, click on the title, **Beat the Bully**.



Make copies of the **Bullies Journal Page** for children to complete. Print out the **Bullies discussion questions** for your own reference. Both of these resources are available on the Web site as **Offline Activities**. Follow the pathway below.



Bullies Journal Page

- From the homepage, click on **Friends**.
- Then click on **Offline Activities**.
- Click on the **Bullies Journal Page**.
- For discussion questions, click on **Bullies in the "Let's Talk" listings**.

Point-of-View Role Plays

Lead a discussion about bullying. Answers will vary based on students' opinions and experience. Feel free to talk about your own opinions and experience as well. Encourage diverse responses. For thoughts from experts, go to *Who's a Bully?* at pbskids.org/itsmylife/friends/bullies/article2.html

What's a bully?

Why do you think some people act like bullies?

What do you think is the difference between bullying and friendly teasing?

What are some examples of bullying that you have witnessed?

What did the bully, the victim, and the bystanders do?

If you were in that situation again, what might you do differently?

You might want to remind the children of the fact presented on the Web site: When one person watching a bullying situation says, "Stop it!", many times the bullying will stop.

Divide kids into small groups. Each group will create a role play about a bully, a victim, and some bystanders. You may want to brainstorm possible situations. Groups can choose to end their role play by demonstrating a good solution to the situation, or they can leave the situation hanging, and let the audience suggest some alternatives. After each performance, ask the audience:

Why do you think the bully was acting so tough and mean?

What did the victim do to try to get out of the situation or make the bullying stop?

Did the bystanders help the situation or make it worse? Why? What could they have done differently?

Ask the performers:

How did it feel to be the bully? When did you feel most/least powerful?

How did it feel to be the victim? When did you feel most/least powerful?

How did it feel to be a bystander? When did you feel most/least powerful?

Bully-Free Posters and Art Work

Encourage kids to create artwork and posters that send messages about bullying. Kids can work in small groups or alone. The **Bully-Free Posters** handout (page 12) outlines steps for creating these posters. Children can post their artwork on *It's My Life*. They may also want to check out bullying.org, a children's Web site that features stories, art, poems, and messages from kids all over the world.



No Bullies Allowed: On-Air Spot

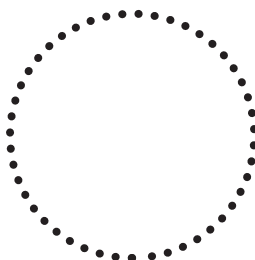
If children are interested, consider making a 30-second No Bullies Allowed video together explaining why bullying is a serious problem, and what kids and adults can do to stop it. Check with your local PBS station (education/outreach department) to see if they might consider airing spots created by kids about bullying. These spots could also be video streamed on the PBS station's Web site. In some cases, a station might be willing to share a videographer or editor to help create the spots. Children must plan carefully as they decide what to include in the allotted 30 seconds. They may want to polish and feature a favorite role play developed in the activity above, then add a brief summary message.

If your local PBS station cannot air the spots, you can still show the video to a gathering of parents and kids, and discuss the issues together:

Is bullying a problem for our group/club/community?

What can we do as a club or group to curb the action of bullies?

What can we do as individuals when we encounter a bully?



Home Alone Survey Form

1. Who are you?

- ☐ a kid (age ____) ☐ a parent ☐ a grandparent

2. How often are (or were) you home alone after school?

- ☐ once a month ☐ once a week ☐ 2-3 times a week
☐ every day ☐ never

3. What are (were) you concerned about when you are home alone?

- ☐ strange noises ☐ taking care of siblings
☐ cooking by myself ☐ being lonely
☐ strangers at the door ☐ not having fun
☐ other: _____

4. What do (did) you like about being home alone?

- ☐ doing what I like ☐ eating what I like
☐ listening to music ☐ dancing
☐ cooking ☐ watching TV or videos
☐ playing video games ☐ playing with my siblings
☐ using the computer ☐ other: _____

5. What is the most difficult thing you ever experienced being home alone?

6. What is the best thing that ever happened to you being home alone?

7. Overall, how would you rate your time being home alone?

- ☐ great ☐ OK
☐ not so good ☐ terrible

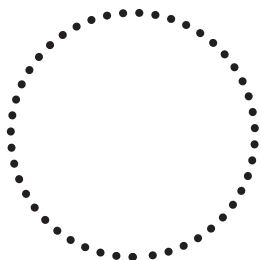


Home Alone Skits and Video

Here's how to create a skit describing what to do (or what not to do!) when you are home alone. You may want to videotape your skit to share with others.



1. Decide what your message will be. There's lots of good information on the Home Alone section of the *It's My Life* Web site! (pbskids.org/itsmylife) Choose a favorite idea. Try to keep the message to one sentence. For example: **Don't answer the door when a stranger knocks.**



2. To make your audience enjoy this message, try exaggerating. The stranger at the door could be very funny or scary. Maybe he or she is a character from a fairytale, like the wicked witch or the big bad wolf.

3. Write down what each person in the skit should say. You may want to include a narrator in your script.

4. Gather props and costumes. Props are objects that make a scene seem real (or funny, scary, etc.), such as a clipboard that a stranger brings to the door. Think about adding background music and sound effects to your skit.

5. Rehearse your skit a few times to make sure everyone knows what he/she is supposed to do.

6. If possible, borrow a video camera from a local school or other community member. Record your skit. If you are unhappy with a certain aspect of it, tape it again.



7. Find out if you can submit your video to your local PBS station's Web site or promotions department. You may want to contact the station's education department, as well.



8. Perform your skit or show your video to other kids or to a family audience.



Bully-Free Posters

1. Come up with a simple message about bullying, for example: why it's bad, how it feels, how kids and adult can help stop it.
2. Think of ways to communicate this with art and a few words. Write a slogan or a short poem.
3. Choose the art materials you want to use: markers, crayons, paints, photos, torn or cut paper, felt, buttons, yarn, or other collage materials.
4. Make a sketch of what your poster will look like.
5. Ask a friend to look at it and suggest ways to make the words and pictures stronger or clearer.
6. Create your poster.
7. Share completed posters with others in the group and discuss them. What makes some posters really effective?
8. Discuss with your group/club leader where you can display your poster.