

# THE RISK OBSERVER

Safety Information for Residents

## LATCHKEY CHILDREN

Sooner or later your child or children will be left with the responsibility of taking care of themselves without an adult's supervision. Just in case they need help when you are not around, they should know how to contact you or emergency personnel. Being prepared will give them the confidence to react sensibly, and give you a little less to worry about when they are out of your reach. At a minimum, they need to know:

- their own address and phone number;
- your exact name;
- the exact name where you work and the phone number;
- the number of another trusted adult; and
- how and when to call 911.

Children should be aware of important medical conditions that require mentioning, such as being diabetic, or asthmatic.

Your child should carry a copy of your apartment key that has no identifiers on the key. Use a safety pin or key ring to secure the key on the child, out of sight. If they lose the key, a plan on how to contact their parents should be in place. Teach them to go to a designated neighbor's apartment or the community office, if reasonably close.

### To and From School

- Plan designated walking/biking routes to and from school and other places they walk or ride a bike. Choose the most direct route with the least number of street crossings, and be sure they know to use crosswalks and obey traffic signals. Make sure they have protective gear for biking, and that they walk their bike through crosswalks.
- Children should always avoid walking or playing alone on the way to or from school. They should walk with a brother, sister, friend, or neighbor.
- Children must know to stay on the designated route and not to be persuaded by friends to "take a short cut" or go a different way. They must know not to talk to or accept a ride or gift from strangers.
- Children who come home to find their door already open, or an apartment window broken, should never go inside. They should go to a designated neighbor's apartment or the community office.
- Make sure your child checks in with you or a neighbor at a regularly scheduled time, and that they know to call you if they will be late.

### When Home Alone

- If there is a fire in the house, they must exit and tell others.
- They need to know when to call 911.
- They must know how to answer the phone so that the caller doesn't suspect them of being in the house alone.
- They need to make sure all doors and windows are closed and locked, and not to open them to anyone without their parent's permission.