

If you choose to let your child sleep overnight at a family member or friend's house, here is a list of safety questions to consider:

1. **What would make my child, tween, or teen “ready”?** - Reflect on the child’s maturity, disposition and experience with being separated from his/her parents.
2. **How well do I know this family?** - Reflect on the interactions you’ve had with this family. Ideally, there have been several interactions prior to the sleepover.
3. **What kind of adult supervision will there be and who else will be present?** - Will there be teenagers present? Others from outside the immediate family? Is this a group sleepover?
4. **What is their household like?** - Will your child feel comfortable in this home? Does the layout lend itself to safety and supervision? Where will your child be sleeping? Is there an open door policy during sleepovers?
5. **Can I talk with this parent(s) about my concerns and needs?** - If you can’t, consider this a negative on the gut check meter. If you can’t comfortably voice your concerns, how can you expect your child to feel safe in this home.
6. **What are my hard and fast rules?** - Obviously, no isolated one-on-one situations should be allowed under any circumstances. Beyond that rule, what about movies? Drinking? Must your child check in for permission if the original plans change?
7. **What safety and comfort contingencies can I put in place?** - Does the home have a pool or guns in the house? Think creatively together about all the different scenarios when it comes to preparing your child for safety and comfort. The What if? game is a good way to talk through possible scenarios and the appropriate responses. What if you woke up in the middle of the night and got scared? What if Danny (older brother) asked you to hang out in his room? This is also a good time to consider sending a cell phone with your child – making it easier to call if they are ready to come home.
8. **What check-in points can we put into the mix?** - Some parents ask for a call before bedtime, or a text or two throughout the evening.