

CAPABLE OF INTERVENING - WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

One of the most challenging and recurring issues facing licensors and child care providers is determining what constitutes “capable of intervening?”

As stated in the Rules 9502.0315, Subp.29a. Supervision. “Supervision” means a caregiver being within sight or hearing of an infant, toddler, or preschooler at all times so that the caregiver is capable of intervening to protect the health and safety of the child. For the school-age child, it means a caregiver being available for assistance and care so that the child’s health and safety is protected. The dictionary defines “intervene” as: “to come in or between so as to hinder or alter an action.”

“How do I meet this requirement to be capable of intervening in my home?” There is no simple answer to that question since many factors must be taken into consideration:

- Ages and number of children in care
- Developmental status of children, including their physical, social, emotional, and cognitive needs
- Layout of home and areas, both indoors and outdoors, used for child care
- Activities in which both the caregiver and children are engaged
- Other distractions (phone calls, computer activity, etc.)
- Possible hazards

It is not just a matter of being able to see or hear them continuously. Providers must:

- Be within reasonable proximity and have direct access to children
- Be actively involved, not just be a presence
- Communicate with parents about their expectations
- Use good judgment
- Know the rules
- Take good care of themselves outside of child care hours

As has been the expectation of Anoka County for quite some time, because of the vulnerability of infants providers should visually/physically check on infants every 15 minutes, regardless of whether they are awake or napping. Monitors do not replace the need to directly supervise, but they serve to enhance supervision.

Providers need to recognize and address the variety of supervision challenges in their program. In the Anoka County “A Guide to Understanding the Regulations,” there is a Supervision Worksheet to help providers think about the factors in their own home. Other helpful resource information can be obtained from the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care, Caring for Our Children, Chapter 2, Standard 2.2.0.1: Methods of Supervision of Children at <http://nrckids.org/CFOC/Database/2.2.0.1>.