

## **Learning To Be Independent**

I remember when I was nine years old, and one day having to make my own decision about what to do. Although I had stayed home alone before, a parent had always returned in time to prepare dinner for everyone. However, this time I decided to cook something to eat while my mother and brother were still out.

I had just finished my homework, after coming home from school, and while my mother and brother were still out I became really hungry. So I decided to make cheese pasta for myself. To make the pasta, I had to boil water by putting the pot on the stove top and turning on the flame under it. I also put a tablespoon of oil in the water so that the pasta wouldn't stick together. Having watched my mom cook many times, I remembered to add the oil even though the recipe I was reading didn't mention this. It also didn't mention how long I had to boil the pasta. I used my judgment to figure out when it was ready to take out.

While I was making the food, nothing went wrong except that I should not have kept the noodles over the fire so long, and I did not take the cheese out of the refrigerator to bring it to room temperature early enough.

After eating, I had just finished washing the plate, fork, and pot I had used when my mom and brother came home with some take-out food. But I had already eaten and felt full. My mom was proud of me for cooking by myself. I felt proud, also, that I had made a decision and stuck with it. However, I was also slightly annoyed watching them eat their food, because it looked more appetizing. My mom kindly offered me some but I couldn't accept. I had eaten enough.

Accomplishing this task on my own made me realize that I could tackle more situations in the future. I felt more confident after this experience than I had ever felt before. I was now ready for the next step. What, I wondered, would that be?