

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services and
Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota**

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April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

Home Alone: Publication Offers Parents Insight on Making Summertime Child Care Decision

BISMARCK, N.D. – As the school year winds down, many parents and caregivers are exploring summertime child care options. Questions may arise during this planning process about whether or not their children are old enough to stay home alone or babysit siblings or neighborhood children.

The North Dakota Department of Human Services' Children and Family Services Division and Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota have created an informational brochure called "*Home Alone: Is Your Child Ready?*" to provide guidance and answers to some of the most commonly asked child supervision questions. The brochure is online at www.nd.gov/dhs/info/pubs/family.html and www.pcand.org.

"There is no 'magic age' when a child suddenly becomes responsible and mature enough to stay home alone," said Marlys Baker, child protection services administrator for the department. "This brochure helps parents evaluate their child's capabilities so they can make a more informed decision."

Home Alone: Is Your Child Ready? highlights guidelines and factors parents should consider when making child supervision decisions including the age and emotional well-being of their child, self-care readiness, home safety strategies, and environmental conditions. There are also tips that can help make staying home alone a positive experience for both children and parents.

"When parents have decided that their children are not ready to stay home alone during the summer, there are numerous activities available that can help keep children busy in fun and safe ways," said Sandy Tibke, executive director, Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota. "School newsletters, local parks and recreation offices and community recreation centers can be excellent sources for information on supervised summer activities for kids."

Parents and caregivers can learn about other parenting resources at www.pcand.org or by calling Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota at 701-223-9052 or toll-free at 800-403-9932.

The North Dakota Department of Human Services' Children and Family Services Division, Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota, the North Dakota State University Extension Service - Parent Resource Centers, and other public and private partners work to strengthen families and promote child well-being.

The Child Abuse Prevention Month proclamation is online at www.nd.gov/dhs/services/childfamily.

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