

**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

**Guidance is Available to Parents and Caregivers on Making Summertime
Child Care Decisions**

BISMARCK, N.D. – Many parents and caregivers are now exploring child care options for the upcoming summer break. Some might be wondering whether their child is old enough to stay home alone or to watch their siblings or other 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?*" that provides guidance and answers some of the most common child supervision questions. The brochure is online at www.nd.gov/dhs/info/pubs/family.html and www.pcand.org under the publications tab.

"North Dakota does not have a state law that dictates a specific age when a child can stay home alone," said Marlys Baker, child protection services administrator for the department. "Age is not the only factor for parents to consider when a child is ready to stay home alone because children mature at different rates."

Home Alone: Is Your Child Ready? gives guidelines and highlights 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.

"If a parent decides that their child might not be ready to stay home alone, many cities in North Dakota offer numerous activities throughout the summer that keep children busy in a fun and safe environment," said Sandy Tibke, executive director, Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota.

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.

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