

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

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**Several factors determine if children can stay home alone; Publication offers
tips for parents and caregivers**

BISMARCK, N.D. – Parents and caregivers are busy planning their children’s summertime activities and making child care decisions. During this process, many questions may arise about whether or not their children are ready to stay home alone or babysit siblings or neighbor children.

To help parents and caregivers with their decision, 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.

“This time of the year, the department receives numerous calls from parents with questions about leaving their children home alone, and parents need to know that 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. “Children mature at different rates, and age is not the only factor parents need to weigh when making their decision.”

Baker said the brochure outlines several of these factors parents should consider when making child supervision decisions including age, emotional well-being and maturity, length of time their child would be alone along with the time of day or night, their child’s physical or mental limitations, and the accessibility of a parent or other adults.

Home Alone: Is Your Child Ready? also touches on other factors to consider regarding self-care, home safety strategies, and other tips that can help make staying home alone a positive experience for both children and parents.

“The brochure provides parents and caregivers with guidelines, so they can take the appropriate steps to safeguard their children this summer and throughout the year,” said Sandy Tibke, executive director of Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota. “It’s a must-read for parents and caregivers as they decide whether self-care is appropriate for their children.”

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

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