



Wadena County Human Services

124 1st Street SE / Wadena, MN 56482 / 218-631-7605 / FAX: 218-631-7616

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Wadena County Human Services is reminding parents/guardians of the State guidelines regarding the ages of children who may be left alone.

Minnesota Child Maltreatment Screening Guidelines are used by child protection agencies in determining if a report regarding lack of supervision needs to be assessed by a social worker.

Minnesota statute 626.556 addresses the issue of failure to provide necessary supervision or child care arrangements. Reports alleging inadequate child care arrangements may be screened in for a child protection response according to the following guidelines:

- Children age 7 and under who are left alone for any period of time.
- Children ages 8-10 who are left alone for more than three hours.
- Children ages 11-13 who are left alone for more than 12 hours.
- Children ages 14-15 who are left alone for more than 24 hours.
- Children ages 16-17 may be left home alone for more than 24 hours with a plan in place concerning how to respond to an emergency.
- Children under the age of 11 should not provide child care.
- Children ages 11-15 who are placed in a child care role are subject to the same time restrictions of being left alone as listed above.
- Children ages 16-17 who are placed in a child care role may be left alone for more than 24 hours with adequate adult back up supervision.

Modifying factors affecting screening decisions include:

- A child's mental ability and maturity level.
- The accessibility of the parent/guardian or designated caregiver to a child by phone and/or in person.
- The presence of intellectual deficits, psychological problems, or mental health concerns; existence of physical problems or disabilities.
- The behavioral history of a child, including suicidal thoughts or actions, fire setting, delinquency, vandalism or assault.
- A child's age, if using the kitchen stove, an iron or other appliance.
- Establishment of a well understood escape plan that has been worked out by the parent(s), or fire drill practice that has been rehearsed with a child; a working fire/smoke detector in the home.
- The presence of unusual hazards in the home.
- A child feeling confident and safe when left alone.

Additional information can be accessed through Child Care Aware Minnesota <https://www.parentaware.org/search/#/> regarding available child care in your area. To apply for child care assistance, please contact Mahube-Otwa <https://mahube.org/>.