

## **ACCIDENTS AND ILLNESSES CAN HAPPEN WHEN GRANDMA HAS THE KIDS: PLAN AHEAD**

As much as parents love their children, there are occasions when one or both of them are away from their children for an extended period of time, such as business trips, vacations, etc. Fortunately, grandparents, uncles, aunts or friends are willing to watch the kids while the parents are away. Is there anything that should be done before the children are taken to grandma's? Absolutely!

Despite grandma's (or aunt's, uncle's, etc.) good intentions, children in her care may need medical attention. The child may injure himself playing, or he may come down with a severe cold or the flu, which may require immediate medical attention. Under Indiana law, if the child is under age 14, then he cannot make his own health care decisions. In such case, the medical care provider will turn to the parent(s) to make the health care decisions for the minor child. If both parents are unavailable, what happens next?

In this situation, medical care providers will be hesitant, without any written direction from the parent, to allow any other person to make health care decisions for the child. Instead, the medical provider will make every effort to reach the parents. This may waste precious time if emergency medical care is needed for the child. To avoid this situation, before leaving their children with another caregiver for an extended period of time, the parents should formally delegate authority to grandma to make health care decisions for the child.

By each parent signing a simple form in the presence of an unrelated witness, they give the substitute caregiver the authority to make health care decisions for the child in the event of an emergency. This delegation can be limited in duration, with the parent(s) filling in a date when the authority expires, such as the date the parents return. If the parents do not know when they will return, they may simply inform the substitute caregiver orally or in writing that the authority has been terminated.

Completing this form each time the parents are away from their children is easy and inexpensive. For your convenience, this form may be downloaded from our website free of charge, so there is no excuse not to be prepared! Please visit [www.dale-huffman.com](http://www.dale-huffman.com), click on the forms section and print out a Consent Delegation of Authority to Consent to Health Care.

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