



Media Release

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For Immediate Release

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The Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) has reached a compromise and settlement agreement with the family of Jonathan Nelson. This settlement has been reached in an attempt to bring closure to this family and this matter.

As part of this settlement agreement and compromise, no later than June 1, 2013, the Department of Human Services Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education will:

- 1) Review the Rules for child care facilities regarding clear identification of DHS certified playground areas;
- 2) Review the Rules for child care facility playground and playground equipment safety;
- 3) Implement a practice of photographing identified playground areas;
- 4) Establish criteria for the placement of physical barriers between identified playground areas and potentially unsafe areas or equipment that children may access from identified areas;
- 5) Identify additional areas where existing rules may be amended to enhance safety;
- 6) Publish for public comment under the Arkansas Administrative Procedure Act proposed amendments, additions, or both, to the rules for Child Care Facilities.
- 7) Train/retrain staff in safety inspections; and
- 8) Prepare and schedule safety training and technical assistance for Arkansas child care providers.

Additionally, within the next few weeks, Tonya Russell the Director of the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, will sit down with Nathan and Sarah Nelson to discuss, without limitation, playground safety.

DHS extends our condolences to the Nelson family for the tragic loss of their son, Jonathan. DHS is committed to all children in the State of Arkansas having a safe and healthy place to play and grow. It is our department's hope that this settlement and compromise will further enhance child safety.