

News Release

Clarence H. Carter, Director

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Arizona receives A+ grade for public disclosure of information related to child abuse or neglect cases

PHOENIX – A new report ranks Arizona among the top states in the nation for its disclosure of information related to child abuse or neglect fatalities and near fatalities. The report, entitled “State Secrecy and Child Deaths in the U.S.,” was released this morning by the Children’s Advocacy Institute and First Star. Arizona received an A+ grade, making it one of only four states to receive top honors for its disclosure laws.

“We are committed to being as open and transparent as the law allows, and we strive to balance the public’s right to know while maintaining the privacy and confidentiality rights of victims and their families,” said Director Clarence Carter.

Arizona’s ranking is an increase from a previous report issued by the same two organizations in 2008, in which Arizona received a B grade. The increase is accredited to the passage of a 2008 state law (HB 2452) clarifying the state’s public disclosure responsibilities and requiring the Department of Economic Security to publish preliminary summary information of child fatalities and near fatalities caused by child abuse or neglect. This information is published on the [DES website](#) and is also included in the Department’s semi-annual report on child welfare.

While Director Carter expressed his pleasure with Arizona’s new ranking, he also reiterated his commitment to continuous improvement of Arizona’s child welfare system.

“Through our work with Governor Jan Brewer’s Child Safety Task Force and continual process improvements, we have already implemented numerous reform strategies to improve the performance of Child Protective Services, thus ensuring that cases involving child maltreatment are investigated immediately and thoroughly,” he said. “Our goal is to protect Arizona’s children and provide them with safe, loving environments where they can live happily and reach their fullest potential.”

Copies of the full report and more information on the Children’s Advocacy Institute and First Star are available at www.firststar.org

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