DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY
Your Partner For A Stronger Arizona

News Release

Clarence H. Carter, Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Statement by DES Director Clarence H. Carter

The following is a statement by the DES Director concerning a number of recent media inquiries. Because he must focus on leading the response to recent issues and cannot make himself immediately available, this statement is being provided in both a print and broadcast format. To see his video statement please click on the box above. Please let us know if you need this statement in a different format.

I and members of my senior leadership team met with Governor Brewer and her staff on Tuesday, Aug. 31. The Governor asked for an update on efforts by the Department of Economic Security to strengthen our systems following a recent spate of child welfare tragedies.

Clarence H. Carter
Director, Arizona Department of Economic Security

The Governor made her expectations crystal clear. She expects Arizona to have the strongest possible child welfare system. She expects DES to find the delicate balance between an imperative to protect children and the goal of preserving families. She expects that system to be accountable and she wants DES to be as transparent as law, regulation and the best interest of children allows.

We provided the Governor and her staff with context for child welfare in Arizona, examples of Arizona's performance compared with other states, and some specific challenges we face.

We then discussed the path to meet her expectations and the creation of an ongoing consultation to allow her and her staff to determine how we are progressing and when she needs to exercise her executive authority to support our efforts.

The road to the highest functioning child welfare system is a journey, not a destination. Our system must be constantly evolving. We must be prepared to learn, renew, re-evaluate existing policy and constantly fine-tune our operations, and to support a mission whose challenges are only exceeded by the importance of protecting our most vulnerable children.

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