



BOBBY D. CAGLE
Director

GINGER PRYOR
Chief Deputy Director

County of Los Angeles DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

425 Shatto Place, Los Angeles, California 90020
(213) 351-5602

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STATEMENT FROM THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

In response to today's Los Angeles Times article, the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services issued the following statement:

The death of 4-year-old Noah Cuatro remains a source of deep pain and mourning for Los Angeles County residents and its child welfare community. Any time a child dies from suspected neglect or abuse, the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) grieves. DCFS honors the memory of each child by closely examining the complexities of the case and its protocols to identify systemic issues and by working closely with stakeholders to make impactful changes that enhance safety and service delivery.

Social work is a calling for people who care deeply about keeping those who are most vulnerable among us safe. DCFS social workers strive daily to make positive contributions and create communities of hope. Tragedies like this one deeply affect our staff, who have dedicated their professional lives to helping children and families in crisis.

DCFS has been as forthcoming as possible with information about this case, including petitioning the Juvenile Court in order to be able to share pertinent information with the public that typically remains confidential due to state law. However, to preserve the integrity of the pending criminal case involving Noah's parents, DCFS must limit its comments about the circumstances leading up to his death in 2019.

DCFS conducted its own internal investigation after Noah's death, which showed that staff involved in Noah's case acted appropriately. The Office of Child Protection's (OCP) investigation also affirmed this.

Led by Judge Michael Nash, OCP is committed to the safety and well-being of children and plays the critical role of providing independent oversight of DCFS. OCP is an

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important part of the checks and balances system for child welfare in Los Angeles County.

However, we continuously endeavor to strengthen our workforce, bring additional resources, and explore innovative methods and meaningful partnerships in the Antelope Valley, with the goal of achieving the best outcomes for children and families.

Additionally, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and Chief Executive Office have made significant investments in this part of the County to enhance the delivery of child welfare services and safety efforts.

Transforming the nation's largest local child welfare system — with 34,000 active cases at any given time — is a sustained, multi-year process that calls for identifying blind spots, closely examining issues as they emerge, and continuously evolving to develop best practices that offset systemic challenges. DCFS remains steadfast in its commitment to supporting the well-being of children and families across Los Angeles County.

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About the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)

The Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) promotes child safety and well-being by partnering with communities to strengthen families, keeping children at home whenever possible, and connecting them with stable, loving homes in times of need. As the largest child protective services agency in the nation, DCFS is responsible for ensuring the safety of more than two million children across 88 diverse cities in Los Angeles County. Established in 1984 to keep children safe and support families in crisis, it is one of the 35 Los Angeles County Departments governed by the five-member Board of Supervisors with nearly 9,000 staff across 20 regional offices, specialized bureaus, and administration that cover a broad array of services and programs. The department is led by Director Bobby D. Cagle.