

Clarence H. Carter, Director

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Arizona Department of Economic Security Releases Semi-Annual Child Welfare Report

Highlights Successes, Challenges of Arizona's Child Welfare System

Director Clarence Carter today announced the Department completed its semi-annual child welfare report and submitted it to Governor Brewer and members of the Legislature. This report, required by Arizona Revised Statute § 8-526, provides information relative to Arizona's child welfare system, including child abuse and neglect reports, investigations, children in care and adoption services.

"Building the most effective and efficient child safety system requires involvement from the community as a whole," said Director Carter. "As evidenced by the intense interest and participation during the Arizona Child Safety Task Force meetings this past year, citizens are ready and eager to help in the crusade to protect Arizona's children."

In October 2011, DES reiterated its commitment to the highest level of transparency and communication as permitted by law. As such, the Department will hold a briefing in April outlining child welfare trends and other related issues as well as the process improvements that are being conducted throughout the agency on a daily basis.

The most recent Semi-Annual Child Welfare report (April 1, 2011 – September 30, 2011) is a six month snapshot of the child welfare system. Some highlights include:

- An increase of adoptions by 8.8 percent (1,078 total) over the same period a year ago. Children with a case plan goal of adoption increased to 2,561 during this reporting period.
- The statewide Child Abuse Hotline received 19,666 calls that met the statutory criteria for a CPS report. This was an increase of 2,598 (13 percent) over the same reporting period in 2010.
- Eighty percent of all children in out-of-home care were placed with relatives or licensed foster parents. As of September 30, 2011, there were 11,535 children living in out of home care, an increase of 7 percent since March 31, 2011, with 9,326 children living with relatives or licensed foster parents.

In addition, the Department has in place continuous process improvement work across the child welfare system to target investigations more effectively, improve caseworker training and coordination, enhance the CPS hotline and create a special unit to investigate criminal-abuse allegations.

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