

## **Statement on the fatality of a 11-month-old boy**

**Date Issued: October 6, 2021**

On November 16, 2019, the Arizona Department of Child Safety received a report regarding an 11-month-old male, Aaron Garza Jr, who was transported to the hospital after being found unresponsive at home. The child presented with multiple injuries suspected to be non-accidental trauma.

The child passed away from his injuries on November 18, 2019. An autopsy occurred on November 22, 2019. The Graham County Medical Examiner's report states the cause of death is blunt trauma to the head and the manner was homicide.

Following an assessment of child safety, the other child in the home was placed in foster care.

On July 13, 2021, the Department substantiated the allegations of physical abuse against the father, Aaron Garza Sr. On July 14, 2021, Mr. Garza was charged with first-degree murder, child/vulnerable abuse and aggravated assault.

The Department is currently providing services to the family.

DCS received the following prior reports involving Aaron Garza Sr:

On March 17, 2019, the Department received a report alleging physical abuse to Aaron Garza Jr by Aaron Garza Sr. The report alleged that Aaron Garza Jr was taken to the hospital for a femur fracture due to falling out of a swing. During the investigation, more injuries were discovered. The doctors were concerned the father's explanation was not consistent with the injuries. The allegations were unsubstantiated as to Aaron Garza Sr. The family was provided with information on services available in the community and the case was closed on May 14, 2019.

On June 10, 2019, the Department received a report alleging neglect to Aaron Garza Jr by his mother and father, Aaron Garza Sr. The report alleged Aaron Garza Jr was taken to the hospital with a head injury due to falling out of a swing. Medical staff felt the father's explanation was plausible. The allegations were unsubstantiated. The family was provided with information on services available in the community and the case was closed August 14, 2019.