

## **Statement on the death of 2-year-old Keandre Gant Jr.**

**Date Issued: April 18, 2024**

On March 24, 2023, the Arizona Department of Child Safety received a report regarding the fatality of 2-year-old, Keandre Gant Jr., who was found deceased in his home. The child was believed to have been deceased for at least a month prior to being discovered.

Following an assessment of child safety, the other children in the home were taken into custody and placed with relatives. A dependency petition was filed with the Pima County Superior Court.

On February 6, 2024, the child's mother, Katie Hernandez, was indicted on charges of first-degree murder for Keandre's death.

The Department is providing services to the family.

DCS received the following prior reports involving Ms. Hernandez:

On September 25, 2018, the Department received a report alleging neglect to a child by Ms. Hernandez. The report alleged Ms. Hernandez used methamphetamine prior to finding out she was pregnant. The DCS investigation did not find evidence to support the allegation. A referral to a community service was made and the family declined in-home services. The allegations were unsubstantiated and the case was closed on November 26, 2018.

On March 23, 2023, the Department received a report alleging neglect to children by Ms. Hernandez. The report alleged a 4-year-old child was found unsupervised by a neighbor. It was discovered Ms. Hernandez left the 4-year-old child and an 8-month old child home alone. Additionally, a large amount of marijuana was being grown in the home within reach of the children. The DCS investigation found evidence to support the allegations and the two children known to the Department were taken into DCS custody. It was unknown at this time there was a third, deceased 2-year old child inside the home. The case was still open and pending investigation when the fatality report was received. The allegations have been substantiated.