



# News

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NEWS RELEASE

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## Utah's Foster Care Lawsuit Ends

Utah's child protection system successfully exited Federal Court supervision today following a 14-year-class action lawsuit.

"This is a significant milestone for Utah's children and families who benefit from the vast improvements Utah made in caring for its abused and neglected children," Governor Jon M. Huntsman Jr. said.

Federal Judge Tena Campbell approved the agreement between Utah and the National Center for Youth Law during an afternoon hearing.

"We're excited to continue our important work of protecting children, preserving families and joining with the community to create the support and services they need," Child and Family Services Director Duane Betournay said. "We'll take a moment to join the community in celebrating our success. But we're already looking forward to improving an already very good system."

Known as David C., the case was filed by the National Center in 1993. Since then Utah has reformed child welfare by:

- Doubling caseworkers from 282 to 612
- Thoroughly training all workers and providing mentors for them
- Making sure each child gets medical, dental and mental health check-ups
- Training and licensing foster parents
- Moving children quickly from foster care to permanent homes, either back with their own parents or through adoption

Governor Huntsman recently created a Child and Family Cabinet Council to focus on preventing harm to children from such threats as domestic violence and substance abuse.

"We succeeded because of hard work by caseworkers, other Child and Family Services employees and our community partners," Human Services Director Lisa-Michele Church. "We've built a nationally recognized system of excellence."

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