

Statement on the death of 2-year-old Parker Scholtes

Date Issued: September 10, 2025

On July 9, 2024, the Arizona Department of Child Safety received a report regarding the fatality of 2-year-old Parker Scholtes, who was found unresponsive after his father left him sleeping in a vehicle in the family's driveway. Parker was transported to the hospital where he was pronounced deceased.

Following an assessment of child safety, the other children in the home were assessed as safe in their mother's care.

On August 1, 2024, a Pima County Grand Jury indicted the father, Christopher Scholtes, on charges of first-degree murder and child abuse in relation to Parker's death.

The Department provided the family with information on services available in the community and the case was closed.

On August 20, 2025, the Department substantiated the allegations of neglect to Parker by the father.

DCS received the following prior reports involving Mr. Scholtes:

On June 28, 2014, a report was received alleging physical abuse to a child by their father, Mr. Scholtes. The report alleged that Mr. Scholtes slapped the child and squeezed her arm causing bruising. There were no bruises observed on the child by the DCS specialist. The DCS investigation did not find evidence to support the allegations, and the child was assessed as safe in Mr. Scholtes' home. The allegations were unsubstantiated. The family was provided with information on services available in the community and the case was closed.

On January 23, 2017, a report was received alleging physical abuse to a child by their father, Mr. Scholtes. The report alleged that the father hit the child and left bruises. The father admitted to spanking the child but there were no bruises left or observed by the DCS specialist. The DCS investigation did not result in evidence to support the allegations, and the child was assessed as safe in Mr. Scholtes' home. The allegations were unsubstantiated. The family was provided with information on services available in the community and the case was closed.

On September 26, 2017, a report was received alleging neglect, physical abuse, and emotional abuse to a child by their father, Mr. Scholtes, and neglect to the child by their stepmother. The report alleged that Mr. Scholtes slapped the child, causing them to lose their breath, and that the child is left to manage their diabetes without parental oversight. The DCS investigation did not result in evidence to support the allegations, and the child was assessed as safe in Mr. Scholtes' home. The allegations were unsubstantiated. The family was provided with information on services available in the community and the case was closed.

On February 11, 2019, a report was received alleging neglect to a child by their father, Mr. Scholtes. The report alleged that the father yells at the child excessively and tells the child things to break them mentally, such as

calling them by foul names and referring to them as “a mistake.” The DCS investigation did not result in evidence to support the allegations and the child was assessed as safe in Mr. Scholtes’ home. The allegations were unsubstantiated. The family was provided with information on services available in the community and the case was closed.

On December 12, 2019, a report was received alleging emotional abuse to a child by their father, Mr. Scholtes. The report alleged that the father has not allowed the child to engage in therapy and calls them derogatory names. During the investigation, Mr. Scholtes disclosed not being able to afford the therapy services and the child expressed a desire to reside with their mother. The DCS investigation did not result in evidence to support the allegations and the child was assessed as safe in Mr. Scholtes’ home. The allegations were unsubstantiated. The family was provided with information on services available in the community and the case was closed.

On April 21, 2020, a report was received alleging neglect to a child by their father, Mr. Scholtes, and their stepmother. The report alleged that the child was kicked out of the father’s home and sent with family. The DCS investigation did not result in evidence to support the allegations, and the child was assessed as safe in Mr. Scholtes’ home. The allegations were unsubstantiated. The family was provided with information on services available in the community and the case was closed.

On September 15, 2020, a report was received alleging emotional abuse to a child by their father, Mr. Scholtes, and their stepmother. The report alleged that the child was experiencing suicidal ideation due to their father and stepmother treating them differently than the other children in the home and calling the child names. The allegations were unsubstantiated. This investigation was still in progress when the next report was received.

On November 30, 2020, a report was received alleging neglect and emotional abuse to a child by their father, Mr. Scholtes, and their stepmother. The report alleged that the father and stepmother were verbally abusive towards the child and call them derogatory names. The allegations were unsubstantiated. This investigation was still in progress when the next report was received.

On December 1, 2020, a report was received alleging neglect to a child by their father, Mr. Scholtes. The report alleged that the father never filled prescription medications for the child and was refusing to set up behavioral health services for the child. The DCS investigation did not result in evidence to support the allegations, as the medications were filled, their distribution was being overseen by the parents, and the child was enrolled in services. The allegations were unsubstantiated. The child transitioned to their mother’s care, the family was referred for in-home services, and the case was closed in April 2021.