



## \$1.5 million settlement in Minnesota six-year-old's foster care death



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**(KMSP)** - Hennepin County reached a \$1.5 million settlement in the wrongful death lawsuit of Kendrea Johnson, a six-year-old found dead in a Brooklyn Park foster care in 2014, according to court documents. The court documents say it is one of the largest settlements against a Minnesota government entity involving the welfare of a foster child.

The six-year-old committed suicide in December 2014. She was found hanging from a jump rope tied to her bunk bed in her foster care mother's home in Brooklyn Park. The lawsuit was filed in 2016.

The Johnson family claims the little girl displayed a list of symptoms consistent with major depression disorder and psychosis, but the county didn't get her the help she needed.

Initially Johnson's grandmother sued for \$20 million, charging that the county failed to protect the Kendrea's 14th amendment rights. The grandmother's lawyers told Fox 9 that they feel vindicated, but they hope that this settlement leads to reforms in the county's child protection system.

"We hope that this was a lesson for Hennepin County in that they will institute changes to better serve the needs of the children that might have needs for mental and emotional care such to minimize any ill effects that Kendrea went to by committing suicide," said Jeff Montpetit, an attorney representing the family.

"Any loss of life is tragic, but the loss of someone so young is especially tragic," said Hennepin County Chief Public Relations Officer Carolyn Marinan in a statement. "We are here to protect children - and we do that every day. We take that charge very seriously. However, in light of the significant costs and uncertainties, settling this lawsuit was in the best interest of all the parties involved."