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## DAY CARE OWNER SENTENCED FOR FRAUD

*\$111,000 in fraudulent claims to Child Care Assistance Program*

**MONROE, La.:** United States Attorney Stephanie A. Finley announced today that Angela S. Lafonta, owner of Tinkerbelle's Day Care in Winnsboro and Rayville, La., was sentenced to 55 months in prison for defrauding the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services' Child Care Assistance Program out of approximately \$120,000 over a three-year period. Lafonta was also ordered to pay \$16,404.99 in restitution.

Lafonta, 37, of Winnsboro, La., was convicted by a federal jury of three counts of making false claims to the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services. Trial testimony established that claims were made for reimbursement for day care services for certain specified children, knowing that some of the children were, in fact, not cared for by the day care center, or that the claims listed an inflated and inaccurate number of hours of attendance.

As participants in the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), Lafonta's day care centers received money from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services through the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services, with the objective of providing financial assistance for low-income parents. Lafonta's day care centers regularly submitted false monthly invoices for payment by the CCAP program, resulting in approximately \$120,000 in wrongful payments from 2006 through 2009.

U.S. Attorney Finley stated: "This case is an example of how greed takes center stage for some who participate in these types of programs. The defendant took taxpayers' money meant to assist people in need without regard for the children she was supposed to be helping. We will continue to hold day care centers, and other entities that defraud the Government, accountable for their criminal activity."

This case was investigated by the Fraud and Recovery Unit of the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services and the Office of Inspector General for the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. The case is being prosecuted by Senior Litigation Counsel Joseph G. Jarzabek.

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