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## Navajo President Buu Nygren signs \$24.2 million contract to replace playground equipment at 16 child care centers

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren today signed a \$24.2 million contract that is certain to make some of his favorite constituents happy.

Play is necessary to stimulate learning, creativity, problem-solving skills and other forms of cognitive development in children. It enhances a child’s social skills, emotional well-being and expression.

On Ashkii Happy Kids Day at the 76th Annual Navajo Nation Fair, the President awarded the contract to Exerplay, a company that sells landscape playgrounds to Navajo-owned and operated Speedy Sales and Services.

The contract allows the installation of playground equipment at 16 child care centers across the Navajo Nation managed by the Navajo Nation Department of Child Care and Development.

"Our children will have better places to play and exercise, and they will feel like their Nation cares about them," President Nygren said. "At the same time, this initiative will also instill pride in our educators by improving the quality of their school grounds."

He said the value of play is critical, multifaceted and extends across all aspects of human development and well-being.



*Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren signs a \$24.2 million contract with Exerplay President Dan J. Gardiner and Division for Children and Family Services Director Thomas Cody to provide new playground equipment for 16 child care centers managed by the Navajo Nation Department of Child Care and Development.*

"We are committed to provide top-quality child care centers for our children," said Deannah Neswood-Gishey, Navajo Department of Child Care and Development department manager. "We have 28 childhood centers across the Navajo Nation."

Speedy Sales and Services, based in Chinle, Ariz., has installed playgrounds across the Navajo Nation



for the past 30 years.

"This is a significant project," Speedy Sales and Services owner Jeff Terrell said. "We are visiting the sites today to ensure everything is in order. We want to do an excellent job."

The beautification of the child care centers will feature state-of-the-art playground equipment, he said.

"Some of the centers are in disarray and badly in need of renovation," Terrell said.

Upgrades will replace existing plastic grass with rubber, bouncy surfaces designed to withstand the dust and dirt that often accumulate on playgrounds, he said.

Other upgrades are new basketball courts, shade



*Navajo President Buu Nygren surrounded by hundreds of happy kids who received a free skateboard and helmet at Kids Day during the 76<sup>th</sup> Navajo Nation Fair on Wed., Sept. 4.*

Defiance Child Care Center, Hogback Child Care Center, Leupp Early Learning Center, Little Miss Muffet Child Care Center, Many Farms Child Care Center, Rough Rock Child Care Center and Tuba City Child Care Center.



structures, fencing, concrete sidewalks, pavement and bleachers.

Some of the centers receiving the new equipment are the Alchini Nizhoni Child Care Center in Shiprock, Crownpoint Child Care Center, Fort

"It's been an honor to work in child care for over 25 years," said Exerplay President Dan J. Gardiner. "These new playgrounds will bring excitement and endless possibilities to the communities and the amazing children they serve. We are thrilled to be a part of this project."

Not only kids will benefit from the new playgrounds, President Nygren said.

"This project is going to create jobs," he said. "We are also supporting a local business, Speedy Sales and

Services, to install the playground equipment. When we invest Navajo dollars in our children, they thrive. This funding is for our Diné children, our most valuable resource and our future."