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Bouncy castle boy awarded damages

A teenager left brain damaged after being kicked on a bouncy castle has won his damages claim against the parents who hired it for their triplets' party.

Sam Harris, now 13, of Spalding, Lincolnshire, suffered a broken skull when a 15-year-old boy kicked his head at the party in Strood, Kent, in 2005.

Mr Justice David Steel said Timothy and Catherine Perry, who hired the castle, had not provided enough supervision.

Damages, for which Mr and Mrs Perry are insured, are likely to exceed £1m.

The incident is likely to be covered through a normal home insurance policy.

The High Court had heard Sam sustained a "very serious and traumatic brain injury" and now needed round-the-clock supervision.

Sam brought the case against the Perrys through his mother Janet, of Long Lane, Gedney Hill.

A claim by the couple that Sam's father David Harris was to blame for the accident, on playing fields behind their home in Jersey Road, was dismissed.

Sam was hurt when the much taller 15-year-old boy caught the left side of his head with his heel while somersaulting on the castle.

Counsel for Mr and Mrs Perry said Mr Harris should have ensured his son, who has Asperger syndrome, did not go anywhere near the inflatable.

The judge said he found it probable that Mrs Perry did give Sam permission to use the castle but that the level of supervision was inadequate.

He gave the Perrys permission to appeal because of the ruling's "potential significance" to anyone operating inflatable equipment.

He added that if the appeal was not pursued, Sam should receive an interim payment of £100,000.

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Mr and Mrs Harris, who are separated, said after the hearing their only motivation in pursuing the case was to obtain damages for their son.

"We are both very relieved that the court has found that Mr and Mrs Perry were negligent as this will now enable us to obtain the specialist support and treatment that Sam needs," they said in a statement.

"Whilst we never wanted the case to conclude at trial, we are pleased that this has provided an opportunity to highlight just how dangerous bouncy castles can be if they are not supervised properly.



Janet Harris said life had been a struggle since Sam's injury



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"We appreciate that thousands of children enjoy playing on bouncy castles every year and we would not wish to stop that happening.

"But it is vital that those hiring them supervise them properly if accidents like Sam's are to be avoided."

Mrs Harris added: "It has been such a struggle.

"The damages he will receive will hopefully help to improve his quality of life."

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