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Child Protective Services

✓ Court hearing postponed in foster infant's death

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SANTA CRUZ — A hearing for a foster-care provider accused of involuntary manslaughter in the death of an infant was postponed Monday for three weeks.

Prosecutors and defense attorneys agreed to postpone a pre-trial hearing for Laura Herrero until Nov. 25.

Jon Hopkins, chief deputy district attorney, said the District Attorney's Office will continue to review materials presented by Herrero's attorney, Stephen LaBerge.

"We're willing to give him an opportunity to present to us everything relating to his client's position before we go to trial," Hopkins said.

LaBerge said he hoped the case would be dismissed or resolved by the next court date, which will be to set a trial date.

"It's simple and straightforward," he

said. "No way should it go to criminal trial."

Herrero, 21, has been charged with involuntary manslaughter in the death of an 11-day-old baby left in a van for more than four hours. She has pleaded innocent to the charge.

Investigators said infant Cedric Blan died Aug. 2 of heat exhaustion after being left in the van in front of the Felton home of Jim and Winona Sherrick.

Herrero, the Sherricks' daughter and an employee of the their foster home, was caring for the infant at the time, investigators said. Herrero reportedly thought her brother had taken the baby from the van to the home.

She was indicted by the grand jury in September.

"It's a tragic case, and we're not going to make our decision lightly," Hopkins said.