

Parents of boy, 2, awarded \$2.2M for '97 drowning

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The parents of a 2-year-old Griswold boy were awarded \$2.2 million in damages for the wrongful death of their son who drowned in a pond near their home almost four years ago.

A jury ordered Pachaug Marina and Campground Association Inc. to pay the money to Timothy and Tina Bresnan following a three-week trial in New London Superior Court. The jury deliberated for about a day before returning the verdict at 3 p.m. Wednesday.

But the verdict offered little consolation to the Bresnans, who say their lives will never be the same since their son, Wyatt, died July 23, 1997.

"It's been really hard," said an emotional Timothy Bresnan. "We miss our son. It's hard to see children, especially

little boys that resemble Peanut," as Bresnan affectionately called him.

During the afternoon of July 23, Wyatt and his brother, Cory, who was 3, wandered from their home, which was adjacent to the campground. The boys were drawn to a playground adjacent to a pond and dock at the campground. Wyatt walked on the dock, fell off and drowned.

Timothy Bresnan said he had put his children to bed and did not realize that the boys wandered off until his son, Cory, returned home by himself. Bresnan immediately headed to the water, where he found his son floating face down. Bresnan attempted CPR without success.

Attorney Robert Reardon said that his



Wyatt Bresnan

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clients sued the campground based on the attractive nuisance doctrine, which essentially means that the campground placed the playground, which would be attractive to young children, in an unsafe area. The playground should have been fenced in, Reardon argued.

"It doesn't make sense to have an unattended playground near the water," said Reardon. "It's unsafe. They should have known that there was a potential for danger. As of late last week the

playground still isn't fenced in."

Reardon, who was assisted by attorneys Tracey Hardman and Mark Dubois, also said the campground has 16 acres of open land where the playground could have been placed.

Attorney Thomas Murtha of Bridgeport, who represented the campground, could not be reached for comment. The Bresnans also sued for negligent infliction of emotional distress and emotional distress caused by nuisance.

The jury awarded the Bresnans \$1.1

million for their son's loss of future income and another \$1.1 million for the loss of enjoyment of life. With interest, the total award is \$2.7 million.

"It's been hell," said Tina Bresnan. "It angers me so much. Cory has been OK. He knows that his brother is in heaven watching over him."