

# 'No sum of money can give back what our son has lost'



Leo Conroy at home in Blanchardstown in 2007 with brother Dean, mother Amanda Riordan and add Keith Conroy; and (above right) Amanda and Keith outside court yesterday. RAY CULLEN & COURTRIX



## Breda Heffernan

**THE** parents of a boy who was born dead and revived after seven minutes, suffering catastrophic brain damage, last night said no amount of money will give back what was taken from their son.

Amanda Riordan and Keith Conroy were in court yesterday to hear that their six-year-old son Leo is to receive a €5.2m settlement. He has cerebral palsy and will never lead an independent life.

## Pleasure

"He's an absolute pleasure to have and we wouldn't give him back for anything in the world," said Ms Riordan.

"He is as independent as a four-month-old baby but [has] the mind of a six-year-old. Nothing stops him. He'd swing out of a tree if he could."

The family, from Greenridge Court, Blanchardstown in Dublin, said no amount of money could compensate them for what happened to Leo.

"We're happy to the point that we can care for him, we know he'll be looked after. But obviously no amount of money can take back what was taken from him and from us," said Mr Conroy.

"In these days, in this economic crisis, you have to be weighing up the risks of what

could or might happen if you don't agree to what we've agreed to," he added.

Ms Riordan, who was then aged 21, was admitted to the Rotunda Hospital on March 20, 2003. Leo was delivered by Caesarean section in a very poor condition.

Counsel for the family said Leo was born dead but recovered a heartbeat after seven minutes. However, he was left brain damaged and with cerebral palsy.

They claimed the hospital had been negligent as it failed to perform the C-section quickly enough, despite clear indications of foetal distress.

Mr Justice Vivian Lavan was told that the family had agreed to a €5.2m settlement of Leo's claim and he approved it. The settlement was made without

any admission of liability.

The judge also approved a €10,000 payment to the Jack and Jill Foundation after hearing that the family had received assistance from the charity.

The High Court also approved a €2m settlement for quadriplegic Carlie Brennan (8) from St John's Close, Clondalkin, in an action taken by her mother, Elaine, against the Coombe Hospital in Dublin.

## Monitor

Counsel for the family claimed that the hospital did not properly monitor Carlie before her birth on July 18, 2000. They also alleged that the hospital should have carried out a Caesarean section much earlier than it did.

It was alleged that, at the time of delivery, the umbilical cord was tight around the child's neck. She had no heartbeat, was unresponsive, was not breathing and required vigorous resuscitation.

As a result, it was claimed, Carlie developed severe cerebral palsy and epilepsy and will never be able to lead a normal life.

The court was told yesterday that the family felt the settlement was a compromise and did not fully compensate them as they were living in a two-bedroom terraced house and would not be able to cope in such a situation for much longer.

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