

OFFICE OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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| LOCAL COMMISSIONERS MEMORANDUM |
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OCFS-4616EL (Rev. 11/98)

Transmittal No: 99 OCFS LCM-20

Date: July 26, 1999

Division: Development and
Prevention Services

TO: Local District Commissioners

SUBJECT: 1997 and 1998 Child Fatalities, Annual
Cumulative Reports

ATTACHMENTS: 1997 and 1998 Child Fatalities, Annual
Cumulative Reports (not available on-line)

The purpose of this memorandum is to share with you two reports: the 1997 Child Fatalities, Annual Cumulative Report and the 1998 Child Fatalities, Annual Cumulative Report.

These two reports were prepared by the Office of Children and Family Services pursuant to Social Services Law 20(5) and sent to Governor Pataki and the NYS Legislature. These two reports contain aggregate information derived from this office's review of child fatality cases which involve:

- ° Reports to the State Central Register for Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR) alleging that a child or children had died as the result of abuse and/or maltreatment at the hands of a caretaker; and
- ° Children who died while in the care and custody or custody and guardianship of a local social services district or other authorized agency.

Because of the relatively small number of children represented in these reports, care must be taken in reviewing percentages. Differences of one or two children can result in seemingly significant differences in percentages. At the same time, we acknowledge that although these fatalities represent a small subset of all the children that we serve, even one child's death is too many. We need to use this information to learn, to see if there are more collective and individual actions that can be taken within the child welfare system in New York State to prevent future child fatalities.

We would draw your attention to the section "Recent Improvements and Future Recommendations" (Please note that this section is the same in both reports). One recommendation, in particular, states that "OCFS Regional Offices will meet with all the local Directors of Services in their region to review these reports, facilitate discussion and solicit input about steps both local social services districts and OCFS should be taking to help prevent future child fatalities".

Accordingly I have asked the Regional Directors to include these reports as an agenda item during the next regularly scheduled regional meeting with your staff. I believe that with your input and attention, we can work together to improve New York's child welfare system and, just possibly, prevent future child fatalities.

Any questions concerning this release should be directed to the Regional Office Director for your region:

<u>Office</u>	<u>Director</u>	<u>Phone Number</u>
Buffalo	Linda C. Brown	(716) 847-3145
Rochester	Linda Kurtz	(716) 238-8201
Syracuse	Jack Klump	(315) 423-1200
Albany	William McLaughlin	(518) 486-7078
Yonkers	Pat Sheehy	(914) 377-2080
NYC 1788.	Gail Hallerdin	(212) 383-

Thank you for your continued cooperation.

Donald K. Smith
Deputy Commissioner
Division of Development and
Prevention Services