



Report Identification Number: BU-18-031

Prepared by: New York State Office of Children & Family Services

Issue Date: Mar 15, 2019

This report, prepared pursuant to section 20(5) of the Social Services Law (SSL), concerns:

- A report made to the New York Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR) involving the death of a child.
- The death of a child for whom child protective services has an open case.
- The death of a child whose care and custody or custody and guardianship has been transferred to an authorized agency.
- The death of a child for whom the local department of social services has an open preventive service case.

The Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) is mandated by section 20 of the SSL to investigate or cause for the investigation of the cause and circumstances surrounding the death, review such investigation, and prepare and issue a fatality report in regard to the categories of deaths noted above involving a child, except where a local or regional fatality review team issues a report, as authorized by law.

Such report must include: the cause of death; the identification of child protective or other services provided or actions taken regard to such child and child’s family; any extraordinary or pertinent information concerning the circumstances of the child’s death; whether the child or the child’s family received assistance, care or services from the social services district prior to the child’s death; any action or further investigation undertaken by OCFS or the social services district since the child’s death; and as appropriate, recommendations for local or state administrative or policy changes.

This report contains no information that would identify the deceased child, his or her siblings, the parent, parents, or other persons legally responsible for the child, and any members of the deceased child’s household.

By statute, this report will be forwarded to the social services district, chief county executive officer, chairperson of the local legislative body of the county where the child died and the social services district that had legal custody of the child, if different. Notice of the issuance of this report will be sent to the Speaker of the Assembly and the Temporary President of the Senate of the State of New York.

This report may **only** be disclosed to the public by OCFS pursuant to section 20(5) of the SSL. **It may be released by OCFS only after OCFS has determined that such disclosure is not contrary to the best interests of the deceased child’s siblings or other children in the household.**

OCFS’ review included an examination of actions taken by individual caseworkers and supervisors within the social services district and agencies under contract with the social services district. The observations and recommendations contained in this report reflect OCFS’ assessment and the performance of these agencies.



Abbreviations

Relationships		
BM-Biological Mother	SM-Subject Mother	SC-Subject Child
BF-Biological Father	SF-Subject Father	OC-Other Child
MGM-Maternal Grand Mother	MGF-Maternal Grand Father	FF-Foster Father
PGM-Paternal Grand Mother	PGF-Paternal Grand Father	DCP-Day Care Provider
MGGM-Maternal Great Grand Mother	MGGF-Maternal Great Grand Father	PGGF-Paternal Great Grand Father
PGGM-Paternal Great Grand Mother	MA/MU-Maternal Aunt/Maternal Uncle	PA/PU-Paternal Aunt/Paternal Uncle
FM-Foster Mother	SS-Surviving Sibling	PS-Parent Sub
CH/CHN-Child/Children	OA-Other Adult	
Contacts		
LE-Law Enforcement	CW-Case Worker	CP-Case Planner
Dr.-Doctor	ME-Medical Examiner	EMS-Emergency Medical Services
DC-Day Care	FD-Fire Department	BM-Biological Mother
CPS-Child Protective Services		
Allegations		
FX-Fractures	II-Internal Injuries	L/B/W-Lacerations/Bruises/Welts
S/D/S-Swelling/Dislocation/Sprains	C/T/S-Choking/Twisting/Shaking	B/S-Burns/Scalding
P/Nx-Poisoning/ Noxious Substance	XCP-Excessive Corporal Punishment	PD/AM-Parent's Drug Alcohol Misuse
CD/A-Child's Drug/Alcohol Use	LMC-Lack of Medical Care	EdN-Educational Neglect
EN-Emotional Neglect	SA-Sexual Abuse	M/FTTH-Malnutrition/Failure-to-thrive
IF/C/S-Inadequate Food/ Clothing/ Shelter	IG-Inadequate Guardianship	LS-Lack of Supervision
Ab-Abandonment	OTH/COI-Other	
Miscellaneous		
IND-Indicated	UNF-Unfounded	SO-Sexual Offender
Sub-Substantiated	Unsub-Unsubstantiated	DV-Domestic Violence
LDSS-Local Department of Social Service	ACS-Administration for Children's Services	NYPD-New York City Police Department
PPRS-Purchased Preventive Rehabilitative Services	TANF-Temporary Assistance to Needy Families	FC-Foster Care
MH-Mental Health	ER-Emergency Room	COS-Court Ordered Services
OP-Order of Protection	RAP-Risk Assessment Profile	FASP-Family Assessment Plan
FAR-Family Assessment Response	Hx-History	Tx-Treatment
CAC-Child Advocacy Center	PIP-Program Improvement Plan	yo- year(s) old
CPR-Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation		



Case Information

Report Type: Child Deceased
Age: 1 month(s)

Jurisdiction: Erie
Gender: Male

Date of Death: 07/19/2018
Initial Date OCFS Notified: 10/02/2018

Presenting Information

The 5-week-old SC died on 7/19/18, while in the hospital. The SC was born premature and was in the hospital since birth. The SC had a series of medical problems and was on life support. The SC died from meningitis. Erie County had an open child protective case with the family at the time of the fatality.

Executive Summary

On 9/27/2018, Erie County Department of Social Services (ECDSS) notified OCFS of the SC (5-weeks-old) passing on 7/19/2018 through form 7065. ECDSS had an open SCR report about the aunt and her child, who resided in the same home as the mother of the SC, at the time of the SC's passing. The SC was born at 28 weeks gestation with multiple medical issues and was on life support. The SC remained in the hospital and was not improving. The SC was removed from life support and passed away.

On 9/26/18, ECDSS learned the SC had passed away on 7/19/18 in the hospital. Immediately upon learning of the SC's death, ECDSS offered support and services. ECDSS met with the family and assessed the safety of the OC residing in the household. ECDSS observed and interviewed the OC. There were no noted safety concerns for the OC. ECDSS offered bereavement services for family members and the family refused services. ECDSS obtained medical records about the death of the SC. There was no autopsy performed.

ECDSS met all NYS regulations and requirements pertaining to casework contacts, safety assessments, risk assessment and the provision of services in the investigation that was open at the time of the SC's passing. ECDSS made a determination about that investigation which has been addressed in the history section of this fatality report. At the time of the writing of this report, the case that was open at the time of the SC's death was UNF and closed.

Findings Related to the CPS Investigation of the Fatality

Safety Assessment:

- **Was sufficient information gathered to make the decision recorded on the:**
 - **Safety assessment due at the time of determination?** N/A

Determination:

- **Was sufficient information gathered to make determination(s) for all allegations as well as any others identified in the course of the investigation?** N/A
- **Was the determination made by the district to unfound or indicate appropriate?** N/A

Explain:

There was no SCR reported fatality about the death of the SC.



Was the decision to close the case appropriate?

Yes

Was casework activity commensurate with appropriate and relevant statutory or regulatory requirements?

Yes

Was there sufficient documentation of supervisory consultation?

Yes, the case record has detail of the consultation.

Explain:

n/a

Required Actions Related to the Fatality

Are there Required Actions related to the compliance issue(s)? Yes No

Fatality-Related Information and Investigative Activities

Incident Information

Date of Death: 07/19/2018

Time of Death: Unknown

Time of fatal incident, if different than time of death:

Unknown

County where fatality incident occurred:

Erie

Was 911 or local emergency number called?

No

Did EMS respond to the scene?

No

At time of incident leading to death, had child used alcohol or drugs?

No

Child's activity at time of incident:

Sleeping

Working

Driving / Vehicle occupant

Playing

Eating

Unknown

Other

Did child have supervision at time of incident leading to death? Yes

At time of incident supervisor was: Unknown if they were impaired.

Total number of deaths at incident event:

Children ages 0-18: 1

Adults: 0

Household Composition at time of Fatality

Household	Relationship	Role	Gender	Age
Deceased Child's Household	Aunt/Uncle	No Role	Female	25 Year(s)
Deceased Child's Household	Aunt/Uncle	No Role	Female	10 Year(s)
Deceased Child's Household	Deceased Child	No Role	Male	1 Month(s)
Deceased Child's Household	Grandparent	No Role	Female	38 Year(s)
Deceased Child's Household	Mother	No Role	Female	18 Year(s)



Child Fatality Report

Deceased Child's Household	Other Child - cousin of the SC	No Role	Male	7 Year(s)
Deceased Child's Household	Other Child - cousin of the SC	No Role	Male	3 Year(s)
Deceased Child's Household	Other Child - cousin of the SC	No Role	Female	4 Year(s)
Deceased Child's Household	Unrelated Home Member	No Role	Male	27 Year(s)

LDSS Response

ECDSS had an open SCR report about the aunt and her child that was not related to the death of the SC. The aunt had moved from NC and had been residing with the MGM and her two sisters. The mother of the SC was pregnant at the time of the open investigation and subsequently gave birth to the SC on 6/4/18. Upon learning of the birth of the SC on 7/7/18 during a follow up visit, ECDSS offered to provide the mother with a perinatal referral and the mother was interested and agreed to the referral. ECDSS reviewed safe sleep with all family members and observed the mother had all the necessary supplies needed for the SC, including a bassinet.

On 7/7/18, ECDSS learned of the birth of the SC during a follow up visit to the home. ECDSS assessed the safety of the OC in the home and interviewed all family members and offered bereavement services. There were no noted safety concerns for the OC at the time of the SC's passing. ECDSS gathered sufficient information and it was determined there was no reasonable cause to suspect that there was abuse or neglect of the SC. ECDSS obtained and reviewed all medical documentation pertaining to the SC.

ECDSS notified OCFS of the SC death through form 7065 on 9/27/2018. The SC had been born premature and remained in the hospital from birth until his eventual death on 7/19/18. The SC was born with multiple medical issues and was on life support. On 7/19/18 the decision was made to remove the SC from life support.

Official Manner and Cause of Death

Official Manner: Natural

Primary Cause of Death: From a medical cause

Person Declaring Official Manner and Cause of Death: Hospital physician

Multidisciplinary Investigation/Review

Was the fatality reviewed by an OCFS approved Child Fatality Review Team?No

Comments: ECDSS does not have an OCFS approved CFRT.

CPS Fatality Casework/Investigative Activities

	Yes	No	N/A	Unable to Determine
All children observed?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When appropriate, children were interviewed?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contact with source?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All appropriate Collaterals contacted?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Was a death-scene investigation performed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coordination of investigation with law enforcement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was there timely entry of progress notes and other required documentation?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Fatality Safety Assessment Activities

	Yes	No	N/A	Unable to Determine
Were there any surviving siblings or other children in the household?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was there an adequate assessment of impending or immediate danger to surviving siblings/other children in the household named in the report:				
Within 24 hours?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
At 7 days?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
At 30 days?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was there an approved Initial Safety Assessment for all surviving siblings/ other children in the household within 24 hours?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there any safety issues that need to be referred back to the local district?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

When safety factors were present that placed the surviving siblings/other children in the household in impending or immediate danger of serious harm, were the safety interventions, including parent/caretaker actions adequate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Explain:
 There were no safety assessments to be completed in the Connections system in regard to the death of the child. The child was a medically fragile child and died of meningitis contracted while in the hospital.

Fatality Risk Assessment / Risk Assessment Profile

	Yes	No	N/A	Unable to Determine
Was the risk assessment/RAP adequate in this case?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
During the course of the investigation, was sufficient information gathered to assess risk to all surviving siblings/other children in the household?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was there an adequate assessment of the family's need for services?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did the protective factors in this case require the LDSS to file a petition in Family Court at any time during or after the investigation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Were appropriate/needed services offered in this case	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Explain:
 n/a



Placement Activities in Response to the Fatality Investigation

	Yes	No	N/A	Unable to Determine
Did the safety factors in the case show the need for the surviving siblings/other children in the household be removed or placed in foster care at any time during this fatality investigation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Were there surviving children in the household that were removed either as a result of this fatality report / investigation or for reasons unrelated to this fatality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explain as necessary: None of the children were removed from the home.				

Legal Activity Related to the Fatality

Was there legal activity as a result of the fatality investigation? There was no legal activity.

Services Provided to the Family in Response to the Fatality

Services	Provided After Death	Offered, but Refused	Offered, Unknown if Used	Not Offered	Needed but Unavailable	N/A	CDR Lead to Referral
Bereavement counseling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Economic support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Funeral arrangements	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mental health services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foster care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legal services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Homemaking Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parenting Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Domestic Violence Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Early Intervention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alcohol/Substance abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child Care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intensive case management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family or others as safety resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Child Fatality Report

Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
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History Prior to the Fatality

Child Information

- Did the child have a history of alleged child abuse/maltreatment? No
- Was there an open CPS case with this child at the time of death? Yes
- Was the child ever placed outside of the home prior to the death? No
- Were there any siblings ever placed outside of the home prior to this child's death? No
- Was the child acutely ill during the two weeks before death? Yes

Infants Under One Year Old

During pregnancy, mother:

- Had medical complications / infections
- Misused over-the-counter or prescription drugs
- Experienced domestic violence
- Was not noted in the case record to have any of the issues listed
- Had heavy alcohol use
- Smoked tobacco
- Used illicit drugs

Infant was born:

- Drug exposed
- With neither of the issues listed noted in case record
- With fetal alcohol effects or syndrome

CPS - Investigative History Three Years Prior to the Fatality

Date of SCR Report	Alleged Victim(s)	Alleged Perpetrator(s)	Allegation(s)	Allegation Outcome	Compliance Issue(s)
05/14/2018	Other Child - cousin of the SC, Male, 7 Years	Aunt/Uncle, Female, 27 Years	Inadequate Guardianship	Unsubstantiated	No

Report Summary:

The report alleged the aunt of the SC hit the 7yo cousin of the SC on the back of the head because he was not getting ready for school fast enough. The aunt hit her child so hard that he fell and had a headache as a result. The incident had a negative emotional effect on the child. The aunt would not allow her child to have dinner but let the other child in the home eat dinner. It was unknown if this had happened before. The aunt's partner and his children had unknown roles.

Report Determination: Unfounded

Date of Determination: 11/28/2018

Basis for Determination:

ECDSS unsubstantiated the allegation of IG against the Aunt for her 7yo son. Based on interviews and observations there was no credible evidence to support the allegations. The 7yo child had no bruises or marks and denied being harmed by his mother. The school nurse had observed the child and there were no noted injuries. ECDSS interviewed all family members and there were no noted concerns for the care of the children. The children stated they had had pizza that night for dinner and the Aunt was not home at the time. The Aunt's partner had ordered pizza for the children. The report was UNF and closed. ECDSS made referrals to community based services.

**OCFS Review Results:**

OCFS found that Erie County Department of Social Services made the appropriate determination based on the information gathered during the investigation.

Are there Required Actions related to the compliance issue(s)? Yes No

CPS - Investigative History More Than Three Years Prior to the Fatality

There was no CPS history more than three years prior to the fatality in NYS.

Known CPS History Outside of NYS

The Aunt of the deceased child had CPS history in North Carolina in regards to her children. There were five reports from 2011 to 2016. Services were recommended in 3 of the reports. The Aunt and her children were residing in the home of the MGM of the SC at the time of the child's death.

Legal History Within Three Years Prior to the Fatality

Was there any legal activity within three years prior to the fatality investigation? There was no legal activity

Additional Local District Comments

We at the Erie County Department of Social Services appreciate the opportunity given us to review the draft report in advance. We find that the facts, as written, describe the unfortunate events and the actions taken in response. We are pleased that OCFS found that the fatality investigation was conducted appropriately and that there are no required actions related to the fatality or to the CPS investigation conducted during the three years preceding the fatality.

Recommended Action(s)

Are there any recommended actions for local or state administrative or policy changes? Yes No

Are there any recommended prevention activities resulting from the review? Yes No