

Report Identification Number: SY-14-040 Prepared by: Syracuse Regional Office

Issue Date: 8/28/2015

This	s report, prepared pursuant to section 20(5) of the Social Services Law (SSL), concerns:
X	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 <u>only</u> 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.

SY-14-040 FINAL Page 1 of 11



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
	Contacts	
LE-Law Enforcement	CW-Case Worker	CP-Case Planner
DrDoctor	ME-Medical Examiner	EMS-Emergency Medical Services
DC-Day Care	FD-Fire Department	BM-Biological Mother
CPR-Cardio-pulmonary Resuscitation		
	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	MN-Medical Neglect	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-Others	
	Miscellaneous	
IND-Indicated	UNF-Unfounded	SO-Sexual Offender
Sub-Substantiated	Unsub-Unsubstantiated	DV-Domestic Violence
LDSS-Local Department of Social	ACS-Administration for Children's	NYPD-New York City Police
Service	Services	Department
PPRS-Purchased Preventive Rehabilitative Services		

Case Information

SY-14-040 FINAL Page 2 of 11



Report Type: Child Deceased Jurisdiction: Oneida Date of Death: 12/09/2014

Age: 1 month(s) Gender: Female Initial Date OCFS Notified: 12/11/2014

Presenting Information

On 12/11/14 OCDSS received an SCR report regarding allegations of DOA/Fatality and IG against the BM. The BM, SC and 3 y/o sibling were sleeping together in a full size bed. BM woke about 6:00am and found SC not breathing. BM called 911. Police and EMS arrived and performed CPR. SC was pronounced dead at the scene. No marks or bruises noted on the SC, and police had no suspicion of BM under the influence of Drugs or Alcohol. No concerns for the 3 y/o surviving sibling.

Executive Summary

On 12/9/14 police and EMS responded to an emergency call from the BM regarding the SC, a 4 week old prematurely born infant, as unresponsive in her home. After attempts to resuscitate, the ME pronounced the SC deceased at about 6:00 a.m. On 12/11/14 OCDSS received an SCR report alleging IG and DOA/Fatality against the BM. In the home at the time of death was BM, an adult cousin, and the 3 y/o surviving sibling. OCDSS interviewed the source, police, ME, DA, BM, collaterals and obtained sufficient information to make an appropriate 24 hour and 7 day safety assessment. OCDSS offered bereavement counseling, parenting, and funeral cost assistance. All contacts and external documentation determined the surviving child was well cared for by BM, with no identified immediate or impending safety factors. OCDSS obtained the SC medical history, which verified a premature birth by cesarean section as a result of fetal trauma caused by a motor vehicle accident. The hospital discharge and pediatrician records for the SC state a healthy baby with no illnesses or special care needs. Risk factors included BM DWI arrest on 11/28/14 (no children in the car at the time of arrest) and the BM self disclosure, supported by MGM, of untreated mental health needs. BM denied drug/alcohol abuse and refused all services (transportation, parenting aide, counseling, evaluations). During the INV BM made it difficult for OCDSS to have contact with her, however OCDSS through diligence and engagement, was able to maintain contact, observe the surviving sibling and determined no safety concerns for the sibling. OCDSS contacted the ME to discuss the final autopsy report (cause of death: Sudden Unexplained Infant Death associated with co-sleeping, with a contributory condition of an RSV infection). The condition was determined "not sufficient to cause death, however may have rendered the decedent more susceptible to the negative effects of an unsafe sleep environment". Pediatrician records indicated safe sleep was discussed with BM on several occasions. OCDSS consulted with their legal department and it was determined to IND against BM for the allegations of DOA/Fatality and IG. The determination was based on the findings that the BM failed to exercise the minimum degree of care by sleeping with her infant with aggravating factors that the contents of the sleeping area (1 comforter, 2 adult size blankets, 3 adult size pillows, another child) and size of the sleeping surface (full size bed) created unsafe conditions. The decision not to file a neglect petition against BM was made due to lack of evidence of negative impact on the surviving sibling, and that the BM has pending criminal charges on an unrelated matter, which required her to comply with a substance abuse evaluation. On 6/15/15 OCDSS indicated and closed the case with no services.

Findings Related to the CPS Investigation of the Fatality

SY-14-040 FINAL Page 3 of 11



Safety Assessment:

Was sufficient information gathered to make the decision recorded on

Approved Initial Safety Assessment?

Yes

Safety assessment due at the time of determination?

Yes

Was the safety decision on the approved Initial Safety Assessment

appropriate?

Yes

Determination:

Was sufficient information gathered to make determination(s) for all allegations as well as any others identified in the course of the investigation?

Yes, sufficient information was gathered to determine all

allegations.

• Was the determination made by the district to unfound or indicate appropriate?

Yes

Explain:

OCDSS made appropriate and timely collateral contacts, gathered relevant external documentation, and made timely determinations.

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:

The decision not to file a neglect petition against the BM was made due to the lack of negative impact on the surviving sibling, and due to the BM having pending criminal charges against her on an unrelated matter, which required her to comply with a substance abuse evaluation. On 6/15/15, OCDSS IND and closed the case with no services. The decision to close the case was determined appropriate.

Required Actions Related to the Fatality

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

Fatality-Related Information and Investigative Activities

Incident Information

Date of Death: 12/09/2014 Time of Death: 06:06 AM

Time of fatal incident, if different than time of death: 06:09 AM

County where fatality incident occurred: **ONEIDA** Was 911 or local emergency number called? Yes

Time of Call: 05:58 AM

SY-14-040 FINAL Page 4 of 11



Did EMS to respond to the scene?

NYS Office of Children and Family Services - Child Fatality Report

Yes

At time of incident leading to death, had child used alcohol or drugs? N/A								
Child's activity at time of incid	ent:							
⊠ Sleeping	☐ Working	☐ Driving / Vehicle occupant						
☐ Playing	\square Eating	☐ Unknown						
☐ Other								
Did child have supervision at t	ime of incident leading to death?	Yes						
Is the caretaker listed in the H 1	ousehold Composition? Yes - Care	egiver						
At time of incident supervisor	was:							
☐ Drug Impaired	☐ Absent							
☐ Alcohol Impaired	⊠ Asleep							
☐ Distracted	☐ Impaired by illness							
☐ Impaired by disability	☐ Other:							
Total number of deaths at inci Children ages 0-18: 1	dent event:							

Household Composition at time of Fatality

Household	Relationship	Role	Gender	Age
Deceased Child's Household	Deceased Child	Alleged Victim	Female	1 Month(s)
Deceased Child's Household	Mother	Alleged Perpetrator	Female	24 Year(s)
Deceased Child's Household	Sibling	No Role	Female	3 Year(s)

LDSS Response

The SC was pronounced dead on 12/9/14 at approximately 6:00 a.m. in the home and care of BM. Cause of death was "ascribed to sudden unexplained infant death associated with co-sleeping". A contributory condition was an RSV, "deemed not sufficient to cause death; however, may have rendered the decedent more susceptible to the negative effects of an unsafe sleep environment". The manner of death was Undetermined. First responders included emergency personnel, Utica police, and the ME. On 12/11/14 OCDSS was notified of the fatality by the SCR. OCDSS immediately began the INV by contacting the police department and persons in the home at DOD. The police reported no concerns that any adults in the household were under the influence at the time of death, nor concerns for abuse or neglect with the surviving child. OCDSS checked CPS and criminal history on the BM and all persons named in the report. Police reported a bag of empty beer cans in the kitchen at the time of death and BM was arrested for DWI a month after the SC birth. OCDSS made appropriate collateral contacts to determine both the SC and surviving child (3 y/o) as healthy, with no medical issues or concerns. OCDSS addressed with BM and collaterals the concerns for abusing alcohol while caring for her children. BM denied drinking while caring for her children, and refused evaluations, treatment and services. The BM and MGM reported BM has mental health concerns, but BM refused to sign consents for OCDSS to speak with previous providers to verify previous mental health counseling and complete an evaluation. During the INV OCDSS consulted with their legal department regarding filing a petition against BM, but was advised there was not enough evidence to support the petition.

SY-14-040 FINAL Page 5 of 11



After consultation with the ME regarding cause of death, OCDSS IND IG and DOA against BM for co-sleeping with the SC with the contents of the sleeping area and size of the sleeping surface creating unsafe sleeping conditions (1 full size comforter, 2 full size blankets, 3 pillows, 3/0 child, obese adult, full size bed). OCDSS closed the case as BM was unwilling to cooperate with services.

Official Manner and Cause of Death

Official Manner: Undetermined

Primary Cause of Death: From a medical cause

Person Declaring Official Manner and Cause of Death: Medical Examiner

Multidisciplinary Investigation/Review

Was the fatality investigation conducted by a Multidisciplinary Team (MDT)?Yes

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

SCR Fatality Report Summary

Alleged Victim(s)	Alleged Perpetrator(s)	Allegation(s)	Allegation Outcome
018461 - Deceased Child, Female, 1 Mons	018463 - Mother, Female, 24 Year(s)	DOA / Fatality	Substantiated
018461 - Deceased Child, Female, 1 Mons	, ,	Inadequate Guardianship	Substantiated

CPS Fatality Casework/Investigative Activities

	Yes	No	N/A	Unable to Determine
All children observed?	×			
When appropriate, children were interviewed?	×			
Alleged subject(s) interviewed face-to-face?	×			
All 'other persons named' interviewed face-to-face?	X			
Contact with source?	X			
All appropriate Collaterals contacted?	X			
Was a death-scene investigation performed?	×			
Was there discussion with all parties (youth, other household members, and staff) who were present that day (if nonverbal,	X			

SY-14-040 FINAL Page 6 of 11



observation and comments in case notes)?				
Coordination of investigation with law enforcement?	×			
Was there timely entry of progress notes and other required documentation?	X			
Fatality Safety Assessment Activi	ties			
	Yes	No	N/A	Unable to Determine
Were there any surviving siblings or other children in the household?	×			
Was there an adequate safety assessment of impending or immediate din the household named in the report:	langer to su	ırviving sib	lings/other	children
Within 24 hours?	\boxtimes			
At 7 days?	\boxtimes			
At 30 days?	\boxtimes			
Was there an approved Initial Safety Assessment for all surviving siblings/ other children in the household within 24 hours?	×			
Are there any safety issues that need to be referred back to the local district?		X		
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?			⊠	
Fatality Risk Assessment / Risk Assessm	ent Profile			
	Yes	No	N/A	Unable to Determine
Was the risk assessment/RAP adequate in this case?	×			
During the course of the investigation, was sufficient information gathered to assess risk to all surviving siblings/other children in the household?	X			
Was there an adequate assessment of the family's need for services?	×			
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?		×		
Were appropriate/needed services offered in this case	×			

SY-14-040 FINAL Page 7 of 11



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 and placed in foster care at any time during this fatality investigation?		X		
Were there surviving siblings/other children in the household removed as a result of this fatality report/investigation?		X		

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	Needed but not Offered	Needed but Unavaliable	N/A	CDR Lead to Referral
Bereavement counseling		X					
Economic support						\boxtimes	
Funeral arrangements		X					
Housing assistance						×	
Mental health services		X					
Foster care						×	
Health care						×	
Legal services						×	
Family planning						×	
Homemaking Services		×					
Parenting Skills		×					
Domestic Violence Services						×	
Early Intervention						×	
Alcohol/Substance abuse		×					
Child Care						×	
Intensive case management						×	

SY-14-040 FINAL Page 8 of 11



Family or others as safety resources						X	
Other						×	
Were services provided to siblings of their well-being in response to the factorial Explain: Services were offered, but not provided Were services provided to parent(s) fatality? No Explain: Services offered but refused	atality? No	other refused	l to participa	ite.	·		
	Hist	ory Prior	to the Fat	ality			
		Child Inf	ormation				
Did the child have a history of alleged child abuse/maltreatment? Was there an open CPS case with this child at the time of death? No 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? No							
	Ir	nfants Under	One Year O	ld			
During pregnancy, mother: ☐ Had medical complications / infect ☐ Misused over-the-counter or prescuence in Experienced domestic violence ☐ Was not noted in the case record to the content of the content in the case record to the content in the	ription drug			☐ Had heavy ☑ Smoked to ☐ Used illic			
☐ Drug exposed ☑ With neither of the issues listed no	ted in case 1	record		☐ With fetal	alcohol effec	ets or syndro	ome

CPS - Investigative History Three Years Prior to the Fatality

Date of SCR	Alleged	Alleged	Allegation(s)	Status/Outcome	Compliance
Report	Victim(s)	Perpetrator(s)		Status/Outcome	Issue(s)

SY-14-040 FINAL Page 9 of 11



07/09/2012	3861 - Sibling, Female,	3862 - Mother, Female,	Inadequate	Unfounded	No
0,7,03,2012	11 Months	21 Years	Guardianship		
	3861 - Sibling, Female, 11 Months	3862 - Mother, Female, 21 Years	Parents Drug / Alcohol Misuse	Unfounded	
Report Summa		21 1 cars	7 Heonor Wilsuse		
_	ging PDAM and IG agains	t BM. Caller stated mothe	r was high on mariiuai	na. intoxicated and	blowing
marijuana smok	e into the baby's face (1 y/		C 3	*	
crying. Determination:	Unfounded	<u> </u>	Date of Determinatio	n. 00/07/2012	
Basis for Determination.		Į.	Date of Determination	11. 09/07/2012	
	have enough credible evid	ence to support the allega	tions of IG and PDAM	Lagainst the BM 7	The SC was
	opriately cared for and dev	11 0		_	
	as unfounded and closed v				
OCFS Review 1					
	OSS INV determination.				
Are there Requ	ired Actions related to th	ne compliance issue(s)?	Yes ⊠No		
	CPS - Investigat	ive History More Than Thr	ee Years Prior to the Fa	tality	
	22.8 23.1 28.1 3	j		J	
There is no CPS	investigative history more	e than three years prior to	the fatality.		
	Comi	loss Onen et the Time	of the Fotolity		
	Servi	ices Open at the Time	of the Fatanty		
		Required Action((s)		
A 41 D	• 144• 1414	1	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	4	
Are there Requ ☐Yes ☒No	ired Actions related to co	omphance issues for prov	visions of CPS or Pre	ventive services?	
LIES MINO					
		Preventive Services H	listory		
	rd of Preventive Services I	- I	•	ised child's sibling	s, and/or the
otner children re	siding in the deceased chil	id's nousenoid at the time	of the fatality.		
		Required Action	(s)		
Are there Regu	ired Actions related to th	ne compliance issues for	nravisian of Faster C	are Services?	
☐Yes ☒No	n ca richons related to th	ic comphanic issues iti	provision or roster C	are but vices;	
		Foster Care Placement	History		

SY-14-040 FINAL Page 10 of 11



There is no record of foster care placement history provided to the deceased child, the deceased child's siblings, and/or the other children residing in the deceased child's household at the time of the fatality.

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 Recommended Action(s)

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

Are there any recommended actions for local or state administrative or policy changes? $\square Yes \boxtimes No$