

## **REPORT ON THE FATALITY OF:**

Zai'mera Eden

**Date of Birth: 11/15/2013**  
**Date of Death: 2/4/2014**  
**Date of Oral Report: 1/30/2014**

### **FAMILY NOT KNOWN TO:**

Dauphin County Children and Youth

**REPORT FINALIZED ON: 1/27/2015**

Unredacted reports are confidential under the provisions of the Child Protective Services Law and cannot be released to the public.  
(23 Pa. C.S. Section 6340)

Unauthorized release is prohibited under penalty of law.  
(23 Pa. C.S. 6349 (b))

**Reason for Review:**

Senate Bill 1147, Printer's Number 2159 was signed into law on July 3, 2008. The bill became effective on December 30, 2008 and is known as Act 33 of 2008. As part of Act 33 of 2008, DPW must conduct a review and provide a written report of all cases of suspected child abuse that result in a child fatality or near fatality. This written report must be completed as soon as possible but no later than six months after the date the report was registered with ChildLine for investigation.

Act 33 of 2008 also requires that county children and youth agencies convene a review when a report of child abuse involving a child fatality or near fatality is indicated or when a status determination has not been made regarding the report within 30 days of the oral report to ChildLine. Dauphin County Children and Youth (agency) had convened a review team on 2/28/2014 in accordance with Act 33 of 2008 related to this report. The Central Region Office of Children, Youth and Families (CROCYF) Human Service Program Representative attended the review.

**Family Constellation:**

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Relationship:</u>	<u>Date of Birth:</u>
Zai'mera Eden	victim child	11/15/2013
[REDACTED]	mother	[REDACTED] 1994
[REDACTED]	father	[REDACTED] 1992
[REDACTED]	brother	[REDACTED] 2011
[REDACTED]	paternal grandfather (PGF)	[REDACTED] 1949
[REDACTED]*	wife of PGF	[REDACTED] 1952
[REDACTED]	paternal grandmother (PGM)	[REDACTED] 1974

\* [REDACTED] does not live in the family home

**Notification of Child Fatality:**

On January 30, 2014, the victim child was brought to Harrisburg Hospital by her mother. The child was non-responsive and was [REDACTED] was completed and a [REDACTED] was found. The child was determined to be in critical condition as a result of [REDACTED], by Dr. [REDACTED] at Harrisburg Hospital, who stated that survival was questionable. The child was transferred to Hershey Medical Center. Dauphin County Children and Youth Agency, along with the District Attorney's office, Detective [REDACTED] from the [REDACTED] Police Department and Victim Witness responded to Hershey Medical Center immediately.

The victim child was diagnosed with [REDACTED] and several tests determined there was no brain activity. She was removed from life support. On 2/4/2014, Zai'mera died as a result of her injuries.

**Summary of DPW Child Fatality Review Activities:**

The CROCYF obtained and reviewed all of the Agency case records pertaining to the [REDACTED] family which included hospital medical records, police reports, and the Agency caseworker dictation involving services and contact with the family. CROCYF interviewed the Agency caseworker, [REDACTED], on 2/5/14 and had conversations with casework supervisor [REDACTED] throughout the investigation. The regional office also participated in the County Internal Fatality Review Team meetings on 2/28/2014 where copies of the medical examiner's reports and autopsy were presented.

**Children and Youth Involvement prior to Incident:**

Dauphin County Children and Youth had no involvement with the family prior to the near fatality report on 1/30/2014.

**Circumstances of Child Fatality and Related Case Activity:**

The mother reported that at about 12:00pm, the child's legs were cold, her back was blue and she was not breathing. Mother called a cab at that time to take her and the child to Harrisburg Hospital. When the mother arrived at the hospital, the child was unresponsive. Zai'mera was transferred to Hershey Medical Center where she found to suffer from [REDACTED]. Dr. [REDACTED] from Hershey Medical Center was not able to determine whether the trauma was accidental or abusive. Additional examination and a post-mortem skeletal survey at Hershey Medical Center identified at least four [REDACTED] at different stages of healing. The parents of the victim child were interviewed by Detective [REDACTED] but provided conflicting information regarding care of the child.

Dauphin County Children and Youth Agency caseworker met with the parents at their home on 1/30/2014. She also met with the identified caretakers for the victim child's older sibling during the investigation. The paternal grandmother presented herself as a resource and assumed care of [REDACTED] at her residence. The paternal grandfather and his wife reside in the home of the parents and also agreed to provide supervision of the child when [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were present. A formal plan of supervision was agreed upon by all parties [REDACTED]. The safety plan [REDACTED] but the child remained in the care of the paternal grandmother.

The child's autopsy was held on February 7, 2014. Significant hemorrhages within the brain were detected. There were several layers of [REDACTED]. There was some bruising to the inside of the left eye that was described as "old trauma" with an approximate dating of 2-3 weeks old. There were at least 5 rib fractures and there was [REDACTED] to the heart as well as the liver. There was disfiguration to the ligaments of the right knee, which was explained to be as a result of pulling. The medical examiner advised that he believed that the injuries were [REDACTED] injuries. He also advised the injuries could have been caused by the force of holding the child and throwing or slamming the child into a soft surface.

██████████ were interviewed separately on February 11, 2014 by Detective ██████████ at ██████████ Police Department. The Agency caseworker observed the interviews behind a one way mirror. The parents provided conflicting information regarding caretakers of the child and possible scenarios in which the child could have sustained the injuries. ██████████ was again interviewed on February 12, 2014 by Detective ██████████ and at that time provided the following confession. ██████████ stated that going into the date of incident, around 4:30AM, she pulled the child out of the pack and play, fed her, and Zai'mera was crying. ██████████ admitted to slamming her forcefully into the pack and play afterwards. She was asked to demonstrate how she did that. ██████████ had her hand around the doll's chest/stomach area, and forcefully pushed the doll onto the desk. She stated that she did this just one time. ██████████ admitted that 2-3 weeks prior, she pushed on Zai'mera's chest and again forcefully slammed Zai'mera down, recognized it was too hard. The ██████████ advised that on more than 2 occasions she pushed on Zai'mera's chest for approximately 2 minutes to try to get her to stop crying.

Dauphin County submitted their report ██████████ on February 21, 2014 with an ██████████, reporting the ██████████ as the perpetrator due to her confession. The ██████████ was charged with Criminal Homicide, Recklessly Endangering Another Person, and Endangering the Welfare of a Child and was incarcerated.

The father was voluntarily ██████████ on March 3, 2014 to gain supportive services and assistance in caring for his son.

**Current Case Status:**

Dauphin County Children and Youth Services has been ██████████ to the father in his search for stable income and independent housing ██████████ was able to resume ██████████ through ██████████. The father was not listed on his ██████████ and he was experiencing difficulty ██████████. The child has begun to display behavioral issues including head banging and the father was ██████████. The child began ██████████ through ██████████ and both the father and son also receive ██████████ through ██████████. ██████████ was able to obtain employment and his son began attending a day care program. The father has been very cooperative ██████████ and made significant progress on his family service plan. The family was closed with the Agency on October 31, 2014.

**County Strengths and Deficiencies and Recommendations for Change as Identified by the County's Child Fatality Report:**

Dauphin County held an Act 33 fatality review team meeting on 2/28/2014. The team was comprised of local CYS professionals, medical professionals, law enforcement and regional staff.

- Strengths: The team felt the agency had handled the [REDACTED] investigation appropriately. All of the necessary [REDACTED] documentation was received by the Agency to allow for thorough investigation. It was also recognized that [REDACTED] were referred by Harrisburg Hospital when the victim child first left the [REDACTED] after birth. The Agency did open the father for supportive services and is assisting with establishing [REDACTED].
- Deficiencies: None were noted in the handling of the case by the Agency.
- Recommendations for Change at the Local Level: It was recommended that the line of communication be better established between the Agency and medical professionals. This would benefit the coordination of services and notification for next steps in working with families.
- Recommendations for Change at the State Level: None were noted.

**Department Review of County Internal Report:**

Dauphin County Children and youth provided CROCYF with Act 33 meeting report on May 30, 2014. The report contained the required information and a summary of the findings of the Act 33 review team. Written approval of the report was sent to the Agency on August 21, 2014.

**Department of Public Welfare Findings:**

- County Strengths:
  - County response to the information received was urgent and thorough during the investigation.
  - The [REDACTED] investigation was completed in a timely manner and included full collaboration with local police and medical professionals.
  - The Act 33 meeting was held within the established time frame and included professionals were able to provide valuable input.
- County Weaknesses:
  - There are no areas of weakness noted.
- Statutory and Regulatory Areas of Non-Compliance:
  - There are no issues of compliance noted.

**Department of Public Welfare Recommendations:**

Dauphin County Children and Youth should continue to conduct thorough and timely investigations in coordination with local law enforcement.