



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

REPORT ON THE NEAR FATALITY OF:

[REDACTED]

BORN: 04/17/2014

DATE OF INCIDENT: 07/10/2014

DATE OF ORAL REPORT: 07/11/2014

FAMILY WAS NOT KNOWN TO:

Allegheny County Office of Children, Youth and Families

REPORT FINALIZED ON:

06/10/2014

This report is confidential under the provisions of the Child Protective Services Law and cannot be released.

(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, DHS 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. Allegheny County has convened a review team in accordance with Act 33 of 2008 related to this report.

Family Constellation:

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Relationship:</u>	<u>Date of Birth:</u>
[REDACTED]	Mother	[REDACTED] 1990
[REDACTED]	Father	[REDACTED] 1990
[REDACTED]	Victim Child	04/17/2014
[REDACTED]	Half-Sister	[REDACTED] 2009
[REDACTED]	Half-brother	[REDACTED] 2011
[REDACTED]	Half-sister	[REDACTED] 2013
* [REDACTED]	Paternal Grandmother of Half Sister	[REDACTED] 1969
* [REDACTED]	Step Pat. Grandfather of Half-Sister	[REDACTED] 1981
* [REDACTED]	Paternal Aunt of Half-Sister	[REDACTED] 1993
* [REDACTED]	Paternal Aunt of Half-Sister	[REDACTED] 1996
* [REDACTED]	Father of Half-Sister	[REDACTED] 1992
* [REDACTED]	Paternal Grandmother for Child	[REDACTED] 1953

*indicates that this individual does not live in the same household as the victim child.

Notification of Child Near Fatality:

Allegheny County Office of Children, Youth and Families received a near fatality report [REDACTED] on 07/11/2014. The day prior, the 3-month-old victim child was found by her mother, unattended, face down, on a couch in the home. The mother said that the child was sleeping on a cousin's chest. The cousin got up and laid the child the couch and went to the store. The child was found some time later by the child's mother between the cushions, face down. The child was taken to Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh in full cardiac arrest on 07/10/2014. The treating physician "certified" the child was in critical condition due to concerns for child abuse and neglect.

Summary of DHS Child Near Fatality Review Activities:

The Western Region Office of Children, Youth and Families (WROCYF) obtained and reviewed all current records pertaining to the family. Follow up interviews were conducted with the County worker, and program specialists. WROCYF participated in the County Internal Near Fatality Review Team meeting on 8/11/2014. A review of the case file along with interviews with the caseworker and supervisor took place.

Children and Youth Involvement prior to Incident:

This family was not known to the agency prior to this incident.

Circumstances of Child Near Fatality and Related Case Activity:

ACCYF received a child protective services (CPS) referral on 07/11/2014 regarding the near fatality of a three-month-old female. The child had been found by the child's mother unattended and face-down on a couch at the family home. The child was transported to Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh (CHP) in full cardiac arrest and was certified to be in critical condition with [REDACTED] due to suffocation.

The child was immediately admitted [REDACTED] and after numerous tests it was determined that the child had sustained [REDACTED].

The mother had reported that the last time she had seen the child alert, the child was lying on her cousin's chest, but when the cousin left to go to a local store, the child was placed on the couch cushion lying face up. However, when the mother went to check on the child, she was lying in between the couch cushions. The child went into full cardiac arrest and 911 was contacted and the child was transported via the ambulance to CHP.

The injured child was [REDACTED] on 08/20/2014. At that time, she was transferred to [REDACTED], for ongoing care.

The alleged perpetrators were not identified in the initial report. ACCYF responded to the report by establishing an immediate safety plan with the family which detailed safe sleep practices. The family was provided with a pack-n-play to be used by extended family that cares for the children.

The family is comprised of mother, father and four children, all under the age of five years. Assessment of the family indicated a number of risk factors, including behavioral health challenges for both parents, as well as substance abuse concerns for father. The vulnerability of the children was also a concern, as was the parents' general ability to parent. ACCYF accepted the family for service and transferred the case to a family services worker on 07/18/2014. In home services were implemented at that time. After the incident Allegheny County Children, Youth and Families (ACCYF) provided both

parents with parenting classes from [REDACTED]. It is their goal to learn more effective parenting strategies through the assistance of [REDACTED]. The family has strong supports to assist them. The County has provided them with items necessary for safe sleeping. The father was also interested in [REDACTED]; he was given information [REDACTED] from the ACCYF worker. All of the other children were assessed as safe in mother's care; therefore, they remained with her.

Law enforcement continued its investigation at the time of the review and had not determined whether criminal charges would be filed.

[REDACTED]

The CY 48 was filed on 08/26/2014 as UNFOUNDED without any Alleged Perpetrators.

On 12/05/2014 the child was placed with her paternal grandmother (PGM). The PGM attended training through [REDACTED] and also to administer [REDACTED]. The mother was offered these trainings and did not attend. It was reported that the child is doing well and is exceeding the expectations when she was in the hospital. The father was incarcerated, on unrelated charges, during this time and was recently released.

Current Case Status:

The case remains open with ACCYF. The child is still placed with the PGM. It was reported that she is doing well and has exceeded all expectations on her improvements, sitting up, holding her head up, seeing, and hearing. [REDACTED]. The PGM is currently looking into a [REDACTED] for her as she continues to grow.

The current goal is still reunification but the mother has only visited with her daughter three times since she was placed with the PGM. The mother was also told she could visit her daughter every day for an hour while she is in daycare. To date the mother has not visited her there. [REDACTED] the County is looking into Subsidized Permanent Legal Custodianship. The PGM is willing to provide her the permanence she needs and has shown she can care for her granddaughter. The PGM is working with the kinship foster care agency and the agency that provided [REDACTED].

The father was recently released from jail on unrelated charges and due to his daughter being placed with his mother he does see his daughter frequently. The three other children remain with the mother and there are no concerns for their well-being, the

mother has not completed the training to care for her daughter and is not sure she can commit to the constant care of her.

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

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. Allegheny County has convened a review team in accordance with Act 33 of 2008 related to this report.

- Strengths:

The Act 33 Review Team identified no statutory or regulatory compliance issues.

ACCYF immediately responded to the child abuse report, conducted a timely investigation, assured the safety of the children and provided in home services and other supports to the family.

- Deficiencies: None

- Recommendations for Change at the Local Level:

The Review Team recommended broad community education regarding safe sleep practices, with a focus on cultural considerations.

The Review Team recommended that medical facilities give advance notice to CYF when a child in their care is ready to be discharged in order to give the agency time to locate resource homes if the parent is not ready to have the child returned.

The Review Team discussed the need to identify specialized resource homes in situations where parents are unable to care for a child with severe injuries to expedite family settings for injured children and avoid costly use of most restrictive medical settings.

The Review Team noted that transition between Intake Workers and Family Service Workers can cause a lapse in services for families and that safety/risk concerns must be communicated effectively.

The Review Team noted that poor linkages between child welfare and behavioral health systems can be a barrier for parents who are in need of assessments and interventions to increase their protective capacities and ameliorate behavioral health needs.

Recommendations for Change at the State Level: None

Department Review of County Internal Report:

ACCYF submitted a DRAFT report to the Department. The Department is in agreement with their recommendations for community education regarding safe sleep, their intent to have medical facilities provide them notice when a child is due for discharge, the county's need to identify specialized resource homes in situations where parents are unable to care for their children.

Department of Human Services Findings:

- County Strengths:

The County responded immediately to this case, they provided assistance to the family and ensured that the child remained safe and placed in a safe environment in order for her to receive the appropriate care necessary for her health conditions.

- County Weaknesses:

ACCYF submission of their Final Act 33 Report is delayed.

- Statutory and Regulatory Areas of Non-Compliance:

No areas of non-compliance noted.

Department of Human Services Recommendations:

ACCYF provides the Department with a DRAFT report within the required timeframes; however the submission of the Final report needs to be timelier.