



REPORT ON THE NEAR FATALITY OF:

[REDACTED]

Date of Birth: 02/5/2014
Date of Incident: 07/30/2015
Date of Report to ChildLine: 07/30/2015
CWIS Referral ID: [REDACTED]

FAMILY KNOWN TO COUNTY CHILDREN AND YOUTH AGENCY AT TIME OF INCIDENT OR WITHIN THE PRECEDING 16 MONTHS:

Berks County Children & Youth Services

REPORT FINALIZED ON:

April 19, 2016

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. Section 6349 (b))

Reason for Review:

Pursuant to the Child Protective Services Law, the Department, through OCYF, must conduct a review and provide a written report of all cases of suspected child abuse that result in a 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.

The Child Protective Services Law also requires that county children and youth agencies convene a review when a report of child abuse involving a fatality or near fatality is substantiated or when a status determination has not been made regarding the report within 30 days of the report to ChildLine.

Berks County has convened a review team in accordance with the Child Protective Services Law related to this report. The county review team was convened on 09/01/2015.

Family Constellation:

<u>First and Last Name:</u>	<u>Relationship:</u>	<u>Date of Birth</u>
██████████	Victim Child	02/05/2014
██████████	Mother	██████████ 1991
██████████	Father	██████████ 1990

Summary of OCYF Child (Near) Fatality Review Activities:

The Southeast Region Office of Children, Youth and Families (SERO) obtained and reviewed all current information pertaining to the ██████████ family provided by Berks County Children & Youth Services (BCCYS). Southeast Regional Office staff participated in the Act 33 review on 09/01/2015 and collaborated with the County and law enforcement.

Children and Youth Involvement prior to Incident:

The family became known to Berks County Children and Youth Services on 05/27/2015 when a report was received alleging the father's lack of appropriate supervision and parenting skills, and allegations of drug use. The mother had no prior children and youth involvement. The case was investigated and services were provided by ██████████ Services included parenting skills instruction and case management to ensure basic needs were being met. ██████████ worked with the family between the dates of 06/10/2015 and 07/28/2015. The family was cooperative during this time and no concerns were identified. The case was closed on 07/28/2015.

Circumstances of Child (Near) Fatality and Related Case Activity:

On 07/30/2015, BCCYS received a ChildLine report stating that victim child [REDACTED] was taken to Reading Hospital after an altered mental status while in the father's care. Mother and father are the sole caregivers of the child. The mother reported that on 07/30/2015, she woke up at 7:30am and prepared to dress for work. The father reported he woke up while the mother was showering and then woke the child and took the child to the living room. At 8:15am the father left the child sitting on the couch while he walked the mother to her car to leave for work. The father stated he returned to the living room where he played video games for approximately 15-25 minutes. The father explained the child was sitting on the couch and all of a sudden went limp and stopped breathing. The mother was at work for approximately ten minutes when she received a call from the father who reported the child had stopped breathing. The father stated he completed three breathing and chest compressions before calling 911. The ambulance arrived approximately five minutes after the father called 911.

The child was taken to Reading Hospital where it was found that the child had a [REDACTED] and chest bruising and chest lesions which was concerning for non-accidental trauma. The child was then sent to Children's Hospital of Philadelphia where it was determined the child had a [REDACTED]. It was determined the [REDACTED] was caused by blunt force trauma. [REDACTED] Due to the severity of the child's injuries, the case was upgraded to a near fatality. [REDACTED]

Children's Hospital [REDACTED] as well as Poison Control who determined that the child's [REDACTED] is consistent with alcohol consumption and it is very unlikely that other substances, such as hand sanitizer, would have caused such high alcohol content. Both parents had denied providing the child with alcohol and no alcohol was found when the home was searched by detectives. It was reported that Nyquil was present in the home however the child would have had to consume large quantities to register a [REDACTED]. It was not legally possible to perform a toxicity screen of the parents when the child arrived at the hospital because the parents were not considered to be the charge of the hospital. The child's juice cup was sent to a lab for testing and the county is currently awaiting results. Berks County CYS has not received notification about the results as of 04/06/2016.

A safety plan was implemented 07/31/2015 stating that mother and father will be supervised at all times while interacting with the child until [REDACTED] recommended. The County caseworker met with five parental relatives, all of whom were appropriate and signed the safety plan assuring they would not allow

the parents to be alone with the child. After the father described actions that caused the injury, the mother was allowed contact with child without restrictions.

During an interview with [REDACTED] Detectives [REDACTED] (D) on 08/03/2015, the father disclosed a different version of what occurred on the morning of 07/30/2015. The father reported the child was very fussy after the mother left home to go to work. The father brought the child to a babysitter who lives a few doors down from their home to allow the father to meet with a friend to discuss employment. The father reported the child was with the babysitter for approximately five minutes. The father and child returned home and the child was still fussy. The father admitted to "tapping" the child three times on her hands that were touching her abdomen. The father reported that 30 seconds after his third "tap", the child stopped breathing and passed out. The father stated he administered CPR, called the mother at work and called 911. The father reported he was afraid to tell [REDACTED] D as well as BCCYS because the mother did not want the child to be cared for by the babysitter and the father was afraid of facing jail time.

The mother and father have separated. The mother and child live together in Delaware County where the mother moved to be closer to a family support system. The case was transferred to Delaware County CYC on 08/21/2015 at which time the family was opened for case management services. Delaware County CYC performed [REDACTED] because the child had high [REDACTED] at the time of the incident; [REDACTED]. The case was closed on 10/21/2015.

The father admitted to causing the child's injuries and was arrested on 08/06/2015. The father was charged with Aggravated Assault, Aggravated Assault on Victim Less than 13 years old, Endangering the Welfare of Children – Parent/Guardian/Other commits offense, Simple Assault, and Recklessly Endangering Another Person.

Summary of County Strengths, Deficiencies and Recommendations for Change as Identified by the County's Child (Near) Fatality Report:

- Strengths in compliance with statutes, regulations and services to children and families: The review team indicated that a family support system was in place and [REDACTED]. There was cooperation between BCCYS, law enforcement and medical personnel.
- Deficiencies in compliance with statutes, regulations and services to children and families: The County reported that ChildLine contacted SERO before they contacted BCCYS which delayed the County's response time.
- Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on reducing the likelihood of future child fatalities and near fatalities directly related to abuse:

The County recommends reinforcement of child abuse reporting requirements for first responders in an effort to facilitate timely responses by all necessary agencies.

- Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on monitoring and inspection of county agencies
There are no recommendations at this time.
- Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on collaboration of community agencies and service providers to prevent child abuse.
There are no recommendations at this time.

Department Review of County Internal Report:

The Department received the county review team report in November 2015. The Department agrees with the County's findings. Letter sent by the Region 04/08/2016.

Department of Human Services Findings:

- County Strengths:

The County worked collaboratively with the multidisciplinary agencies. The County provided appropriate services, including parenting skills education and case management to ensure the family followed up with the child's medical appointments, and ensured the transition of those services to Delaware County Children and Youth Services upon the mother's move to that county.

- County Weaknesses:

There were no weaknesses noted.

- Statutory and Regulatory Areas of Non-Compliance by the County Agency.

There were no areas of non-compliance noted.

Department of Human Services Recommendations:

The Department did not have any recommendations. The County completed a thorough, well-coordinated investigation that resulted in a positive outcome for the victim child and her family.

