



REPORT ON THE NEAR FATALITY OF:

██████████

Date of Birth: 04/16/2015

Date of Incident: 04/02/2016

Date of Report to ChildLine: 04/03/2016

CWIS Referral ID: ██████████

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

Allegheny County Office of Children, Youth and Families

REPORT FINALIZED ON:

09/20/2016

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.

Allegheny County Office of Children, Youth, and Families (ACOCYF) has convened a review team in accordance with the Child Protective Services Law related to this report. The Act 33 meeting was held on 05/03/2016. Allegheny County's Review team reviewed the case on 06/20/2016.

Family Constellation:

<u>First and Last Name:</u>	<u>Relationship:</u>	<u>Date of Birth:</u>
Isabella Willie	Victim Child	04/16/2015
[REDACTED]	Mother	[REDACTED] 1991
[REDACTED]	Father	[REDACTED] 1965

Summary of OCYF Child Near Fatality Review Activities:

The Western Region Office of Children, Youth and Families (WRO) reviewed all of current case record pertaining to the family. The WRO participated in both the county's Act 33 meeting and the Review Team meeting. The Act 33 meeting occurred on 04/25/2016 and the Review Team meeting occurred on 06/20/2016. During this meeting, medical professionals and law enforcement presented their information. The Intake and Ongoing caseworkers also presented the current information at this meeting. The WRO also reviewed all information in the Child Welfare Information System database.

Children and Youth Involvement prior to Incident:

Allegheny County Children Youth and Families (ACOCYF) report a limited history with the family. There were no reports on the victim child prior to this report. [REDACTED]

The mother has no history with the agency as a parent. However, her family has been open on and off with ACOCYF since 2004. The mother experienced [REDACTED] in both the Child Welfare and the Juvenile Probation Systems. [REDACTED]

The father has had several referrals related to his older children to another mother. The father was not involved with these referrals. There is no case documentation that he was contacted during the assessments.

Circumstances of Child Near Fatality and Related Case Activity:

On 04/03/2016, ACOCYF received a report of suspected child abuse on the victim child. The victim child was brought to Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh (CHP) due to an altered mental status. The victim child was admitted [REDACTED] a toxicology screen which came back positive for cocaine. [REDACTED] physician certified the victim child was in serious or critical condition based upon suspected abuse or neglect.

ACOCYF immediately went to CHP and found the mother sleeping in the victim child's room. The mother reported to the caseworkers she was out with the victim child earlier in the evening; they were visiting friends down the street. When the mother and the victim child returned home, the mother and the father got into a verbal argument. The mother left to take a walk due to this argument. The mother reported getting a phone call from the father about 3:30 AM stating the victim child was screaming in her sleep. The mother instructed the father to put a cold washcloth on the victim child's head. When the mother returned home a few hours later, she noticed the victim child was having difficulty breathing and was screaming in her sleep. The mother took the victim child into the shower with her and the child continued to scream. The mother then had the father call for the paramedics.

The father was interviewed by telephone later that day since he was not at the hospital. The father reported the victim child was fine the night prior. The father stated while the victim child was sleeping, she woke up three times. The first time she woke up crying, the father assumed she lost her pacifier. The father gave it to her and she was quiet. The second time she was crying more, the father held her for a few minutes and then put her back down. The third time was "completely different". The victim child appeared to be asleep, but was crying and would not wake up. The mother was not home, the father called to inform the mother of the situation. The father reported the victim child was given a bath; however, she still did not calm down and she could not be soothed. The mother returned home and they called 911.

The victim child was taken to CHP. The victim child was admitted [REDACTED] due to breathing difficulties. A toxicology screen was completed which was positive for cocaine. It was believed the victim child's condition was caused by cocaine ingestion. Cocaine would remain in the victim child's system for 2-3 days according to the physicians. The effects of this would be seen within minutes to hours. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The ACOCYF caseworker spoke to [REDACTED] physician on 04/04/2016. The symptoms the victim child exhibited would have presented themselves within minutes or hours of having been exposed to or ingesting cocaine. This resulted in the victim child going into respiratory failure. The victim child [REDACTED] and she was doing well. She [REDACTED] the hospital on 04/05/2016.

The ACOCYF caseworker observed the police interview with the parents. Both the mother and the father denied any knowledge of illicit substance abuse by themselves or each other. However, they did admit they both have a past history of illicit substance abuse. The father stated he had not used since [REDACTED] in 2010. [REDACTED]

Initially, the mother denied anyone having access to the victim child over the past four or five days. The mother then stated the victim child did visit some friend's [REDACTED] house earlier that evening. The mother denied knowing [REDACTED] real name or last name or his street address. On the way home, the mother felt the victim child was drowsy, but the mother assumed it was from playing. The mother stated the child would get tired after playing for a few hours. The mother did admit to drinking "shots of vodka or something". The mother also stated there were no sober adults in the home responsible for the children. The victim child was in the living room with a 4-year-old child and a 7-year-old child. The adults were in the kitchen. They would check on them periodically. The mother did acknowledge [REDACTED] used to sell cocaine, but denied any current drug involvement. The mother did not know [REDACTED] legal name, even though she has known him for eight years. The mother was unable to provide an address or phone number for [REDACTED], but could walk to his house. To the contrary, the mother was unable to help the agency locate [REDACTED] house in order for the agency to assess the safety of the children in his home.

The mother did not appear to understand the severity of the trauma of the victim child. She did later admit to using two lines of cocaine after bringing the victim child home; her urine screen was positive for cocaine. The father was not drug tested. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The mother has been charged with Endangering the Welfare of Children (F3) and Recklessly Endangering another Person (M2). She is awaiting trial on these charges. She was also charged with being in a House of Prostitution (M3) and Loitering for the Purpose of Prostitution (M3). She was incarcerated on 06/04/2016 for the charges related to the near fatality and for the charges related to Prostitution. The Prostitution charges were dismissed on 07/21/2016 and she was released from the [REDACTED] Jail.

The victim child was [REDACTED] to the father on 04/05/2016. The father agreed to a safety plan with the mother. The father is not to allow unsupervised contact with the mother. The mother no longer lives in the family home.

Before the victim child returned to the father's home the caseworker did complete a safety check of the home. The caseworker identified the home as "cluttered" but appropriate. The caseworker instructed the father to declutter the home due to the victim child being mobile. [REDACTED] medication was out of reach of the child. On the next visit the house was cleaned and decluttered. The father has services in the home to help keep it clean. He also has support from his extended family in caring for the victim child. The father filed for custody of the victim child in Family Court. The hearing was held on 05/05/16 the father obtained full physical and legal custody of the victim child. It is reported at this time the mother was not visiting the victim child.

ACOCYF did not accept the case for services. The victim child remains in the care of her father, while the mother was arrested in connection with the near-fatal event on 06/04/2016. ACOCYF offered the father community supports, which he has accepted, to assist with the transition. [REDACTED]

On 5/31/2016, ACOCYF filed the Child Protective Service Investigation Report with ChildLine with a status of Pending Criminal Court.

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

ACOCYF responded immediately to this report and conducted a thorough investigation and immediately ensured safety of the child.

Deficiencies in compliance with statutes, regulations and services to children and families:

No deficiencies noted at this time.

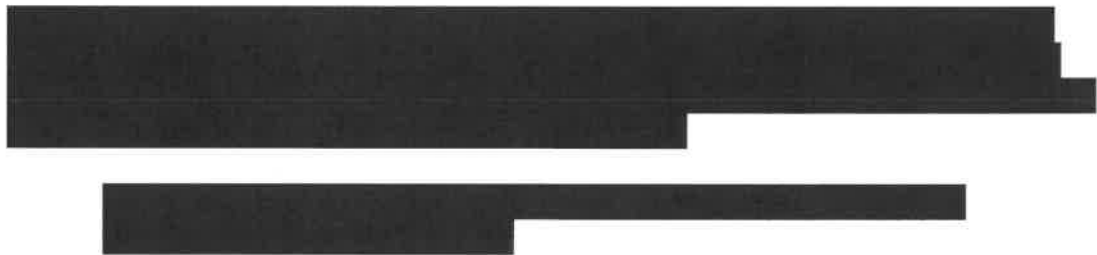
Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on reducing the likelihood of future child fatalities and near fatalities directly related to abuse:

In the case reviewed, on-call caseworkers responded to the report prior to the CPS caseworker assignment. The on-call caseworkers (not formally assigned to the investigation) conducted an initial interview with the mother, prior to the arrival of law enforcement. While this occurrence did not appear to interfere with the law enforcement investigation, the independent interviews did not adhere to the Joint Investigative Protocol agreed upon by CYF, law enforcement and the Office of the District Attorney.

The Review Team recommended review and adherence to the Joint Investigative Protocol.

During the discussion of this case, it was also noted that referrals to law enforcement occur at varying times during the course of the investigation, including CYF, ChildLine, and hospital facilities. Each of these entities has a different timeline during which they make the appropriate law enforcement referral.

The Review Team recommended that discussions occur between these entities so that timelines related to referrals to law enforcement can be formalized.



Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on monitoring and inspection of county agencies:

The Review Team requested an update on the case and recommendations.

Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on collaboration of community agencies and service providers to prevent child abuse:

The Review Team recommended review and reinforcement of the established joint investigative protocol developed by the Allegheny County Office of the District Attorney, law enforcement and CYF.

Department Review of County Internal Report:

ACOCYF submitted a draft report to the WRO. The report was reviewed by the Region. The Region agrees and also recommends the recommendations established by ACOCYF.

Department of Human Services Findings:

County Strengths:

ACOCYF did see the victim child immediately.

ACOCYF did collaborate with the local police department.

ACOCYF put a safety plan in place to allow the father to keep the victim child safe and have supervised contacts with her mother.

ACOCYF supported the father's efforts to obtain custody of the child.

County Weaknesses:

ACOCYF did not complete/submit a county internal report in a timely fashion.

ACOCYF caseworkers interviewed mother prior to police involvement.

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

3130.21 (b) ACOCYF did not submit a county final internal report in a timely fashion in accordance with Act 33.

Department of Human Services Recommendations:

ACOCYF needs to review with the Intake Department their policy concerning interviewing alleged perpetrators prior to a police report being filed.

There is a need for emergency in-patient substance abuse services. Children are removed from their parents' care due to their parents' substance abuse issues; however, if in-patient substance abuse services were more readily available, children may potentially be able to be reunified in a timelier and safer fashion causing less trauma to the child.