



**REPORT ON THE NEAR FATALITY OF:**

[REDACTED]

**Date of Birth:** 01/22/2016

**Date of Incident:** 03/21/2016

**Date of Report to ChildLine:** 03/21/2016 & 03/22/2016

**CWIS Referral ID:** [REDACTED]

**FAMILY NOT KNOWN TO COUNTY CHILDREN AND YOUTH AGENCY AT TIME  
OF INCIDENT OR WITHIN THE PRECEDING 16 MONTHS:**

Bucks County Children & Youth Social Services Agency

**REPORT FINALIZED ON:**

10/23/2016

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.

Bucks County conducted an ACT 33 review on June 09, 2016 in accordance with the Child Protective Services Law related to this report. The county review team investigation determined that there was abuse; therefore, the report was "Indicated" within 30 days of the receipt of the investigation.

**Family Constellation:**

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Relationship:</u>	<u>Date of Birth:</u>
[REDACTED]	Biological Mother	[REDACTED] 1991
[REDACTED]	Biological Father	[REDACTED] 1985
[REDACTED]	Victim Child	01/22/2016
[REDACTED]	Sibling/Twin	[REDACTED] 2016
[REDACTED]	Sibling	[REDACTED] 2013
* [REDACTED]	Paternal Grandmother	[REDACTED] 1953
* [REDACTED]	Father of [REDACTED]	[REDACTED] 1988
* [REDACTED]	Maternal Half-Sibling	[REDACTED] 2008

\*Not members of the household and/or did not live in the home at the time of the incident.

**Summary of OCYF Child Near Fatality Review Activities:**

Bucks County Children & Youth Agency (Agency) CPS Social Worker, provided the Review team with an oral and written summary of the Shales case.

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

There is no known information that any members of this family were previously involved with the Bucks County Children & Youth agency.

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

On 03/21/2016, the Agency received multiple reports [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Reports indicated concern for 2 month old child, [REDACTED]

On the evening of 03/21/2016, [REDACTED] biological mother, allegedly brought her two twin daughters [REDACTED] over to her neighbor's home to watch the children because [REDACTED], her husband and, son [REDACTED] (age 2 ½) were all sick.

The neighbor reported that [REDACTED] had brought the girls over, laid [REDACTED] on her couch, and within a short period of time of [REDACTED] being on her couch she heard [REDACTED] gargling. The neighbor reported that she proceeded to take [REDACTED] to another neighbor's home who expressed concern that [REDACTED] appeared blue and that 911 needed to be contacted as soon as possible. The neighbor returned to the [REDACTED] home and told the [REDACTED] that they needed to contact 911 or that she would call 911. [REDACTED] proceeded to call 911 and reported that [REDACTED] had gotten something stuck in her mouth. [REDACTED] said she had tried to retrieve the object and subsequently scratched [REDACTED] throat with her nails when she tried to remove the object from [REDACTED] mouth.

[REDACTED] was transported to St. Mary's Medical Center, [REDACTED] Pennsylvania, [REDACTED]. Given the severity of [REDACTED] injuries, St. Mary's Medical Center requested that [REDACTED] be brought to the hospital for evaluation as well. As this situation unfolded, and the Agency became aware, the children's paternal grandmother was presented as a resource for the children and a no unsupervised contact Safety Plan was implemented. On the same evening, [REDACTED] scans from St. Mary's Medical Center had been re-read [REDACTED] the Safety Plan was revised to reflect that the parents would have no contact with the children.

Given the severity of [REDACTED] injuries, she was transferred to St. Christopher's Hospital for Children, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. [REDACTED]

St. Christopher's Hospital for Children relayed that it is their policy to conduct a full evaluation on the sibling twin of any twin that comes to their hospital with injuries indicative of abuse. Given the severity of [REDACTED] injuries, siblings [REDACTED] twin) and [REDACTED] were both taken to St. Christopher's for evaluation.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] It was explained that these injuries are consistent with child abuse, non-accidental inflicted trauma given the location and type of injury.

[REDACTED] It was explained that the [REDACTED] could be indicative of a blow to the chest or a hard fall.

[REDACTED] can develop in children who experience severe coughing fits, vomiting and asthma; however, it is extremely rare. [REDACTED] it can also be caused by an individual sitting on a child or holding the child tightly around his chest.

Initially, it was reported to this Agency that the children's pediatrician was [REDACTED] Upon contacting them, they indicated that they did not have any patients with the last name of [REDACTED] and referred [REDACTED] The children's pediatric medical records were obtained. The children's birth records were obtained from St. Mary's Medical Center. All Records were provided to St. Christopher's for review. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Mother denied drug use; however, the Agency refuted this as mother tested positive for methamphetamines on April 04, 2016. Father reported drug use (methamphetamines and heroin). [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
On 05/15/2016, [REDACTED] were charged, arrested and remain in custody as of the writing of this report. Charges included Aggravated Assault, Conspiracy-Aggravated Assault, Endangering the Welfare of Children, Recklessly Endangering another Person. Both parents remain incarcerated at the [REDACTED] Correctional Facility. A preliminary hearing is scheduled for 08/30/2016.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Paternal Grandmother, was made a Bucks County Children & Youth kinship foster parent for all three children. [REDACTED]

On 05/13/2016, the Agency filed Indicated Reports of Child Abuse against both parents on failure to provide medical treatment as well as filing a Pended Report of Child Abuse against both parents on causing bodily injury [REDACTED]

**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, including cooperation between law enforcement and county agencies during investigations of suspected child abuse investigations:

Communication and collaboration with community reporters (several referrals received regarding this incident) as well as with the Bucks County District Attorney's Office.

St. Mary's Medical Center's prompt transition of [REDACTED] to St. Christopher's Hospital may show increased awareness of injuries caused by abuse needing specialized treatment.

The Agency ensuring that [REDACTED] had immediate medical examination follow-up at St. Christopher's.

Agency contacting and working with both maternal and paternal family members to assure permanency on behalf of the children.

[REDACTED]

**Department Review of County Internal Report:**

The agency did complete an internal report on 03/21/2016. Pennsylvania Department of Human Services concurs with the county agency's report.

**Department of Human Services Findings:**

County Strengths:

The agency immediately contacted law enforcement to report suspected child abuse.

The agency collaborated with St. Mary's Medical Center, as well as St. Christopher's Hospital, to gather additional information on the child's condition.

The agency maintained consistent collateral phone calls and face-to-face visits with St. Christopher's Hospital medical personnel and ongoing physician.

The agency obtained and reviewed the child's medical records.

The Agency ensured that the victim child's siblings, [REDACTED] had immediate medical examination follow-up at St. Christopher's.

The agency made a determination within 30 days of the date of the report and appeared to take all information obtained during the investigation into consideration when making the decision to "Indicate" the report.

The agency is working with both maternal and paternal family members to assure permanency on behalf of the children.

[REDACTED]

County Weaknesses:

[REDACTED] identified their need for additional training regarding the "cues and signs" of child abuse.

District Attorney's Office could have initially requested a no-contact order between the parents and children.

**Department of Human Services Recommendations:**

Ensure all workers are educated that, when a near fatality or fatality occurs, all other children in the home should receive a medical examination, especially with elementary age children and younger.

Advocate around the rights of children versus the rights of parents.

Educate the judiciary on the safety needs of children.

Ensure [REDACTED] for all children in home where abuse occurred.

Educate Agency on effects of trauma on children.

Provide [REDACTED] teach grandmother tactics regarding potential behaviors related to trauma.

Educate the pediatric community on the signs of potential child abuse.