



REPORT ON THE NEAR FATALITY OF:

[REDACTED]

Date of Birth: 10/15/2016
Date of Incident: 12/20/2016
Date of Report to ChildLine: 12/20/2016
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 AND YOUTH SERVICES

REPORT FINALIZED ON:
07/21/2017

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 convened a review team in accordance with the Child Protective Services Law related to this report. The county review team was convened on 01/03/2017.

Family Constellation:

<u>First and Last Name</u>	<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Date of Birth</u>
[REDACTED]	Victim Child	10/15/2016
[REDACTED]	Biological Mother	[REDACTED] 1995
[REDACTED]	Biological Father	[REDACTED] 1996
[REDACTED]	Sibling	[REDACTED] 2016
[REDACTED]	Half-Sibling	[REDACTED] 2013
[REDACTED]	Half- Sibling	[REDACTED] 2015
[REDACTED]	Maternal Grandmother	[REDACTED] 1973
[REDACTED]	Maternal Step Grandfather	[REDACTED] 1971

Summary of OCYF Child Near Fatality Review Activities:

The Southeast Regional Office of Children, Youth and Families (SERO) obtained and reviewed all current and past case records pertaining to the family. Follow up interviews were conducted with the caseworker. The regional office also participated in the Act 33 Team meeting held on 01/03/2017 where the history of the case and chronological documentations were presented by Berks County Children and Youth Service’s team. The assigned SERO Program representative continued working with the County team and the Berks County detectives, sharing information with the other entities involved.

Summary of Circumstances Prior to Incident:

The Family was known to Berks County Children and Youth Services (BCCYS). The victim child has a twin sister, one 2-year-old half-brother and one 4-year-old half-sister (who are with their respective biological fathers). There was a previous General Protective Services (GPS) investigation on 02/23/2016 with concerns that mother was smoking marijuana and unclean living conditions. This report was not found to be valid and the case was closed at the intake level 03/24/2016.

Another GPS report received on 10/15/2016 with concerns that the victim child and sibling tested positive for THC at birth. This report was investigated at an intake level and mother was able to provide clean urine for the caseworker. No further services or actions were taken.

Circumstances of Child Near Fatality and Related Case Activity:

A 2-month-old female child was brought into the local hospital emergency room on 12/20/2016 after being found by father in distress at a family friend's home. There are varying stories surrounding the events that led up to the child being brought to the hospital. Mother and father report that father went to check on the child and noticed that "something was not right" and brought the child to mother. The victim child reportedly appeared limp and her eyes were not open. Per mother and father's account, mother took the child into a separate room and performed CPR on the child by herself. At this point, mother reports that the child gasped and vomited up blood. [REDACTED] the mother and father were in a separate room with the children for approximately one hour when she heard a "commotion". [REDACTED] reports investigating this commotion and found the mother was holding the victim child, who appeared to be limp and non-responsive. [REDACTED] took the child from mother and noting that the child's frenulum in her mouth was bleeding. Mother allegedly said that she did not see the torn frenulum.

The victim child was transferred from the local hospital to a Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP). [REDACTED]

Due to the severity of the victim child's injuries, all other children were [REDACTED] CHOP per the doctor's request to ensure that no injuries were found on them. [REDACTED] the victim child's twin sister also presented with bruises on her face, back and chest. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The victim child's oldest half-sibling had bruising on his face and ear [REDACTED] was completed on him as well. [REDACTED] A full skeletal survey also came back negative. The victim child's other half-sibling had [REDACTED] which all came back as unremarkable.

The parents were also no longer allowed unsupervised contact with any of mother's children. Due to the severity of the children's injuries, [REDACTED] the two older children while they reside with their biological fathers who were determined to be a resource for the children. [REDACTED] the twins and placed them in a medical foster home [REDACTED]

On 12/29/2016, mother and father came to the office to meet with the caseworker to go over paperwork [REDACTED]. During this meeting, mother made an admission to caseworker that she had both twins in the same car seat and was carrying them down her bedroom stairs when she fell. Mother reported that the twins did not fall out of the seat but did get "smacked around". Mother reported that they cried momentarily but then seemed to be fine. Caseworker asked mother how she could explain the healing injuries. Mother reported that she didn't know. Caseworker relayed this information to the county detectives so that they could speak to mother for their criminal investigation.

On 12/30/2016, the caseworker called [REDACTED] and asked if it was possible that the twins sustained their injuries from mother falling down the stairs while carrying both children in the same car seat. [REDACTED] stated that the short answer was no and that it doesn't explain the healing injuries. He also stated that it is "highly unlikely" that the twins would sustain major injuries from that if they weren't even thrown out of the car seat. He also questioned the logistics behind how the twins were specifically placed in one car seat. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The caseworker ended the contact. The investigation continued. The children are currently in a medical foster home [REDACTED]. The victim child receives [REDACTED] through Lancaster County Children and Youth. She is also being monitored by a Pediatrician in Lancaster County.

The mother was arrested on 01/30/2017 for multiple counts of aggravated assault and endangering the welfare of children and is awaiting trial. There has been no charges filed against the father at this time.

On 02/17/2017, BCCYS determined that there was substantial evidence identifying both the mother and father as responsible for the injuries suffered by the victim child and her twin sister.

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. There was collaboration between the County Children and youth agency and the County detectives. The County was also able to locate the fathers of the two half siblings as resources preventing them from being placed in a foster home.
- Deficiencies in compliance with statutes, regulations and services to children and families. NONE
- Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on reducing the likelihood of future child fatalities and near fatalities directly related to abuse; NONE

- Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on monitoring and inspection of county agencies;
NONE
- Recommendations for changes at the state and local levels on collaboration of community agencies and service providers to prevent child abuse.
NONE

Department Review of County Internal Report:

The County report was received on 03/24/2017. The department is in agreement with the County report.

Department of Human Services Findings:

- County Strengths: The County collaborated very well with the hospital personnel. They collected all medical records and continued to maintain contact with the detectives until the alleged Perpetrators were identified.
- County Weaknesses: NONE
- Statutory and Regulatory Areas of Non-Compliance by the County Agency.
NONE

Department of Human Services Recommendations:

There are no recommendations made as a result of this review.