



OFFICE OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

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REPORT ON THE FATALITY OF:

BARBARA KAMILLE ADAMS

DATE OF BIRTH: 08/25/2010

DATE OF DEATH: 03/07/2012

FAMILY KNOWN TO:

Bucks County Children and Youth Social Services Agency

REPORT FINALIZED ON: 10/31/2012

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, DPW 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. Bucks County convened a review team in accordance with Act 33 of 2008 related to this report on 03/22/2012.

Family Constellation:

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Relationship:</u>	<u>Date of Birth:</u>
[REDACTED]	Biological mother	[REDACTED]/1984
[REDACTED]	Biological sibling	[REDACTED]/2003
[REDACTED]	Biological sibling	[REDACTED]/2006
Adams, Barbara	Deceased Child	[REDACTED]/2010

Fathers (lived in other households):

[REDACTED]	Father of [REDACTED]	[REDACTED] 1982
[REDACTED]	Father of [REDACTED]	[REDACTED] 1979
[REDACTED]	Father of Barbara	Adult

Notification of Child Fatality:

On February 27, 2012 the child was taken to St. Mary's hospital by her mother and was found to be in critical condition from signs of extensive physical abuse. The child was non-responsive with severe head injuries and multiple contusions to her chest, back and leg areas, that were in various stages of healing. Further examination showed that the child had severe brain [REDACTED]. The child also had [REDACTED] to both eyes and a broken left forearm that appeared to be 10 to 14 days old along with a re-fracture of a previously broken right leg. The child sustained multiple rib fractures, both old and new, with [REDACTED] from either current or prior rib breaks. Two old burn marks on the child's left upper hip from a cigarette lighter was also discovered. Due to the child's multiple injuries the child was transferred to St. Christopher Specialty at Bucks County and was later found to have little or no brain functioning. The child was declared brain dead and unable to breathe on her own; she expired 03/07/2012.

Summary of DPW Child Fatality Review Activities:

The Southeast Regional Office obtained the victim child's family case records from Bucks County Children and Youth for review. SERO interviewed the county's investigating caseworker and the county's Fatality lead administrator, St. Christopher Specialty at Bucks County, Aria Health and St. Mary's records were also obtained and reviewed in addition to current periodicals concerning the victim child as well as participation in the county's Act 33 meeting on 03/23/2012.

Children and Youth Involvement Prior to Incident:

Bucks County first received information on the family on 07/29/2011 concerning a sibling of the victim child not receiving appropriate dental care since 06/2010. The child's mother had not gotten her daughter [REDACTED] the needed dental treatment for the child's many cavities. The County opened the case and monitored the family with home visits on 08/24/2011, 09/26/2011, 10/26/2011 (an attempted visit), 10/28/2011 and 11/02/2011 and via telephone calls. On 01/08/2012, the victim child's leg had healed burn marks on the back of her upper thigh that was caused by a lighter, in addition to a broken leg [REDACTED]. The child was seen at the St. Mary's Emergency Room and St Christopher's Bucks Specialty for those injuries. The children and their mother were seen during these visits. Bucks County Children and Youth Services closed the family's case on 01/08/2012 after the parent obtained the medical and dental care for her daughter, [REDACTED] and gave explanations for the victim child's other two injuries, leg burn and [REDACTED]. The mother's explanation of the [REDACTED] was that the child had fallen while playing with her siblings.

With monitoring from Bucks County Children and Youth Social Services, the parent obtained the required dental and medical care for one of her daughters, she enrolled in an on line nursing course and obtained [REDACTED]. Services provided by the county were monitoring the children's medical needs, [REDACTED], parent employment/training and [REDACTED].

The parent completed all the requirements on her 11/12/ 2011 Family Service Plan before the required dates and the county closed the [REDACTED] case on February 3, 2012 because there were no other child protection concerns with the family and [REDACTED] appeared to be a committed and appropriate parent to her children. Neither the county agency nor the [REDACTED] were aware that the mother's paramour was occasionally spending weekends in the home babysitting the children while the mother went away with family members. There was no history of domestic violence.

Circumstances of Child Fatality and Related Case Activity:

The county worker and police conducted joint interviews with the mother, other children and the [REDACTED]. The child's mother on 02/26/2011 went out of state with a cousin to visit family, leaving her three daughters with her boy friend, [REDACTED], who was

babysitting the three children in the family's apartment, until she returned. The victim child, who was healing from a [REDACTED] to her right leg, was forced by the babysitter to throw her dirty diaper in the trash can. The [REDACTED] stated that the child bumped into a stack of chairs that fell on her causing the child's multiple injuries. However the victim child's two older sisters gave a different account of what happened. The two siblings stated that the [REDACTED] would take their younger sister into the bedroom and close the door. The siblings stated they could hear loud noises coming from the room and it sounded like things were being thrown around. When the [REDACTED] and their younger sister would come out of the room, their sister would be crying, with blood coming from her nose. Both siblings stated that they saw blood coming from their sister's mouth on two different incidents. The two children reported this to their mother who chose not to believe that Barbara was at risk. After the last incident, the [REDACTED] called the child's mother to tell her that her youngest daughter looked like she was sick and unconscious. The child's mother returned from Rhode Island to see about her child. On February 27, 2012, the child was taken to St. Mary's Hospital by her mother and the child was found to be in critical condition from signs of extensive physical abuse. The child was non-responsive with severe head injuries and multiple contusions to her chest, back and leg areas, that were in various stages of healing. Further examination showed that the child had a severe brain [REDACTED]. The child also had [REDACTED] to both eyes and a broken left forearm that appeared to be 10 to 14 days old, along with a re-fracture of a previously broken right leg. The child sustained multiple rib fractures, both old and new, with [REDACTED] from either current or prior rib breaks. Two old burn marks on the child's left upper hip from a cigarette lighter were also discovered. Due to the child's multiple injuries the child was transferred to St. Christopher Specialty at Bucks County and was later found to have little to no brain functioning. The child was declared brain dead and unable to breathe on her own; she expired 03/07/2012.

The [REDACTED] was arrested and charged with aggravated assault felony charges and placed under one million dollars bail.

Current Case Status:

The [REDACTED] was later charged with murder and remains in the Bucks County prison under one million dollars bail. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. The visitation plan for [REDACTED] with her daughters is: Thursdays 5-7 pm and every other Saturday and Sunday from 10 am-6 pm. These visits are supervised by [REDACTED] the maternal grandmother. It is still a possibility that the mother may be criminally charged for her child's death. Bucks County [REDACTED] on 04/26/2012.

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

County has convened a review team in accordance with Act 33 of 2008 related to this report on 03/23/2012.

Strengths:

- Collaboration among the county agency, housing workers, police, Child Advocacy Center during [REDACTED] investigation.

Deficiencies:

- Collaboration with collateral entities would have created a more complete picture of this family. Information about formal and informal babysitters or other caretakers would have been valuable for safety planning in this case. The agency is in the process of developing protocols for case closures and will be educating staff on the importance of comprehensive collateral contacts.

Recommendations for Change at the Local Level:

- Require education for community hospital emergency rooms. Barbara was seen by the pediatrician on 12/19/11, was taken to Aria Health on 1/7/12, and to Saint Mary's Hospital on 1/8/12. Barbara's arm injury was not reported until 2/26/12 when she was taken to St. Mary's Hospital and St. Christopher's Hospital.

Recommendations for Change at the State Level

- None identified.

Department Review of County Internal Report:

The Department has received and reviewed the county's internal report, and the department is in agreement with the county.

County Strengths:

- The County's facilitation of the Act 33 community team review was well attended and informative.

County Weaknesses:

- The mother reported that the child's burns were caused by a babysitter and that the mother would no longer be using that babysitter. The Bucks County C&Y did not use the opportunity to ask the victim child's mother in-depth questions pertaining to these injuries. Accepting the parent's explanation of the child's injuries without verifying or investigating the parent's statements placed Barbara at risk. The [REDACTED] was closed within forty nine days before the child's critical episode that led to the child's death. During the fatality investigation, it was determined that the previous statements that the parent had given as to how the child sustained the earlier injuries were fabricated and untrue.

- The county completed timely risk and safety assessments; however, these assessments were based on information provided by the mother that was not otherwise verified.
- Statutory and Regulatory Areas of Non-Compliance:
None identified.

Department of Public Welfare Findings:

Department of Public Welfare Recommendations:

In-depth questions should be asked during investigations of CPS and GPS abuse cases and all statements given by those responsible for the victim child should be explored before closing the cases.