



REPORT ON THE NEAR FATALITY OF:

[REDACTED]

Date of Birth: 04/14/2018

Date of Incident: 08/11/2019

Date of Report to ChildLine: 08/11/2019

CWIS Referral ID: [REDACTED]

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

Blair County Children, Youth and Family Services

REPORT FINALIZED ON:

01/30/2020

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.

Blair County Children, Youth and Family Services (CYF) did convene a review team in accordance with the Child Protective Services Law related to this report. The agency facilitated the Act 33 review on 08/30/2019.

Family Constellation:

<u>First and Last Name:</u>	<u>Relationship:</u>	<u>Date of Birth:</u>
[REDACTED]	Victim Child	04/14/2018
[REDACTED]	Mother	[REDACTED] 1994
[REDACTED]	Father	[REDACTED] 1992
[REDACTED]	Sibling	[REDACTED] 2016
[REDACTED]	Sibling	[REDACTED] 2014
[REDACTED]	Maternal Cousin	[REDACTED] 2002
[REDACTED]	Maternal Uncle	[REDACTED] 1997

* Denotes an individual that is not a household member or did not live in the home at the time of the incident, but is relevant to the report.

Summary of OCYF Near Fatality Review Activities:

The Central Region Office of Children, Youth and Families (CROCYP) reviewed case records pertaining to the [REDACTED] family. CROCYP representative engaged Blair County Children, Youth, and Family Services personnel to discuss the incident and subsequent findings. CROCYP attended the CYFS agency’s Act 33 meeting on 08/30/2019.

Children and Youth Involvement prior to Incident:

Representatives of Blair County CYFS informed CROCYP that the family was known to the agency. The agency received the initial General Protective Services (GPS) report on 05/16/2014 with concerns that [REDACTED] and with concerns all three of them, the child and his parents, sleep on a mattress on the floor. Services were implemented to assist the family and it was noted that [REDACTED] and the family was being educated on safe

sleeping. The case was closed on 07/14/2014 when the family relocated [REDACTED]. Blair County CYFS personnel initiated a referral to social services [REDACTED] and the agency was informed [REDACTED].

On 09/24/2014 a GPS was initiated when Blair County CYFS was notified that the mother and father had split and that the mother was again residing in Blair County. She and her child were located at [REDACTED] and were planning on moving in with the maternal grandmother.

[REDACTED] The agency verified that there were no safety threats in the grandmother's home, and the case was closed on 10/13/2014.

[REDACTED] A GPS report was received by the County alleging that the mother's 3-year-old and 1-year-old are outside till 11:30 PM and that the children "are dirty and smell bad". The allegations of improper supervision could not be substantiated, but the mother's home was dirty. This GPS was concluded on 04/07/2017 after there were improvements in relation to home conditions and improvements with the children's hygiene.

On 08/07/2017, Blair County CYFS received a Child Protective Services (CPS) report alleging that the mother's paramour picked up [REDACTED] and threw him into a wall during a domestic dispute that he was having with the identified child's mother. The paramour was indicated for Engaging in Per Se Acts / throwing a child. It was noted that the child hit his head during the incident. Another GPS was received on 02/21/2018 alleging that the mother was again homeless [REDACTED]. Concerns were also noted that the grandmother's home was dirty with boxes and toys stacked "to the ceiling". [REDACTED] gave the grandmother one week to clean up the apartment. Blair County CYFS opened the family up for services on 04/24/2018. The mother of the children was making progress with the established Family Service Plan (FSP) by obtaining stable housing, participating with services that [REDACTED], and family reunification services. The CYFS agency closed the family for services on 05/31/2019.

Circumstances of Child Near Fatality and Related Case Activity:

On 08/11/2019, the victim child was reported missing from the home. The child was discovered in an alley located very close to the family's home by an older sibling. The child was unconscious. Reports indicate that the victim child was severely beaten resulting in acute facial trauma and periorbital hematoma. The victim child was first

transported to a local medical center and then life flighted to a specialized hospital [REDACTED]. Medical practitioners also identified that the child had anal tears. The physicians treating the victim child assessed that the child was victim of child abuse. Blair County shared the following to the Department which outlines the child's injuries via the Doctors that treated the child. "pt had ecchymosis to right and left temporal area, entire face covered in dry blood, fresh blood dripping from nose and lip. pt has a largely swollen right eye that was unable to be opened or examined due to inability to open eye. pt had bruising to neck and petechia from chest up into neck area. There were bruises and petechia to left shoulder, abrasion to right flank and 2 small abrasions to back. pt has circular red marks around genitalia."

At the time of the incident, an alleged perpetrator was not identified. The CYFS agency reported that the Police Department with jurisdiction is interviewing several suspects that would have had access to the victim child. Blair County CYFS ensured safety of the victim child's two siblings by allowing the children to be cared for by the maternal grandmother. The grandmother was cleared by respective Police Department, and the two siblings were transported to a local hotel to be with the grandmother. The mother of the victim child was also cleared by the investigating Police Department and joined her children at the hotel. Blair County CYFS arranged for the family to stay at a local hotel since the family would not be able to return to the home due to pending search warrants. The investigating Police Officers indicated that by examining physical evidence, the victim child was not harmed inside the mother's home. Police Officers identified blood spots on the building about three feet up from the ground from where the victim child was located. The respective Police Department has sent the victim child's diaper, blood samples, and other articles of interest out for testing. A maternal uncle and a maternal cousin were persons of interest during the onset of the investigation. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The CYFS agency developed a safety plan on 08/13/2019 that outlined that that neither the victim child nor his siblings would have any contact with the identified maternal uncle.

The victim child was discharged from the acute care hospital [REDACTED], PA on 08/14/2019 with instructions for care takers to administer Ibuprofen, Bacitracin topical ointment, and Acetaminophen to the victim child. At the time of discharge, the victim child was reunited with his mother, his siblings, and the maternal grandmother who were subsequently permitted to return to the home. Records indicate that the child healed well from his injuries.

On 09/12/2019, Blair County CYFS personnel identified that the children's mother was not following the established safety plan and that she allowed the children to have contact with the maternal uncle. The agency proceeded to take custody of the three children, and subsequently placed the children in non-relative foster care while kinship resources were being explored.

Blair County CYFS indicated the report on 10/08/2019 with an unknown perpetrator. The agency indicated on Causing Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of a Child Through Any Act/Failure to Act (subcategories: Rape, Involuntary Deviant Sexual Intercourse,

Aggravate Indecent Assault, Statutory Sexual Assault, Unlawful Contact with a Minor, Indecent Assault, and Sexual Assault), and Causing Bodily Injury to Child Through Recent Act/Failure to Act (subcategories: Causing, Beating).

At the time of this report, the victim child and his siblings continue to receive foster care services. The current child permanency plan (CPP) focuses on stable housing, maintaining the home in a clean, safe and appropriate manner, appropriate medical care for the children, [REDACTED]

Note: On 11/01/2019, news outlets reported that the investigating Police Department arrested a friend of the family for causing the injuries to the victim child. The Department informed Blair County CYFS personnel that a CPS near fatality investigation would begin again due to new information being obtained. [REDACTED]

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

- Strengths in compliance with statutes, regulations and services to children and families

The Act 33 Team felt that there was good communication with law enforcement.

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

The Act 33 Team felt that law enforcement should have been present for the County Review Team Meeting.

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

No identified recommendations.

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

No identified recommendations.

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

No identified recommendations.

Department Review of County Internal Report:

The CROCYF received Blair County CYFS' Child Fatality Report on 01/24/2020. Upon review of the documentation, CROCYF assessed that the information efficiently described the incident, the actions taken by the agencies involved, and the status of the case. There were no issues or concerns regarding the content of the report.

Department of Human Services Findings:

- County Strengths:

During the Act 33 meeting, it was evident that CYFS personnel were prepared to present the case.

CYFS personnel ensure that the victim child's mother followed through with all medical appointments for her son.

CYFS personnel arranged a variety of services to assist the family.

Blair County CYFS assisted the family financially in areas of purchasing medication, hotel stay, and transportation.

- County Weaknesses:

At the time of this report, the CROCYF has not identified areas of weakness.

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

At the time of this report, the CROCYF has not identified areas of regulatory non-compliance.

Department of Human Services Recommendations:

The CROCYF has no recommendations in regard to this incident and the subsequent investigation by Blair County CYFS.