



REPORT ON THE FATALITY OF:

Izabella Bussard

Date of Birth: 04/12/2014

Date of Incident: 04/28/2017

Date of Report to ChildLine: 04/29/2017

CWIS Referral ID: [REDACTED]

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

Lancaster County Children and Youth Agency

REPORT FINALIZED ON:

10/17/2017

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.

Lancaster County has convened a review team in accordance with the Child Protective Services Law related to this report. The county review team was convened on 05/24/2017.

Family Constellation:

<u>First and Last Name:</u>	<u>Relationship:</u>	<u>Date of Birth:</u>
Izabella Bussard	Victim Child	04/12/2014
[REDACTED]	Sibling	[REDACTED] 2003
[REDACTED]	Biological Mother	[REDACTED] 1978
[REDACTED]	Biological Father	[REDACTED] 1972
[REDACTED]	Non-relative Household Member	[REDACTED] 1974

Summary of OCYF Child Fatality Review Activities:

The Central Region Office of Children, Youth, and Families (CERO) obtained and reviewed all current case records pertaining to the family. CERO staff reviewed various reports, assessments, and case documentation provided by Lancaster County. CERO staff attended the agency Act 33 meeting on 05/24/2017 and discussed the case with agency staff at that time and on 06/29/2017.

Summary of circumstances prior to Incident:

Lancaster County Children and Youth Agency (LCCYA) received an anonymous report on 01/19/2016 regarding the family and possible drug activity in the home as there were often many people coming and going at different times during the day. The caseworker conducted a home visit and met with the parents and children. The caseworker did not note any safety concerns in the home and the parents denied drug activity. The agency also followed up with local law enforcement that stated they had received some calls, but none of the allegations were ever substantiated. The agency screened this case out without any further services.

Circumstances of Child Fatality and Related Case Activity:

On 04/28/2017, the victim child was found face-down and unresponsive in the family's in-ground pool. The child was unable to be revived and was pronounced dead at 11:00 pm on 04/28/2017. Lancaster County Children and Youth Agency received the report on 04/29/2017. It was reported that the 14-year-old sister was supposed to be supervising the victim child after school as the parents would take naps at this time. The parents rested at this time because the victim child would often be up during the night and was very active, so the parents were not sleeping at that time either. On the date of the incident, the mother was on the couch in the living room and the father was upstairs in the bedroom. The 14-year-old sibling had asked [REDACTED] would be able to watch the victim child and [REDACTED] agreed to do this. The sister let the dogs out to the backyard, where the pool was also located, and went to her room. This back door has a hotel-style latch at the top of the door to prevent the victim child from getting to the backyard. However, on this day, the sister did not flip the latch over. The victim child was with the mother on the couch.

When the mother woke up after an unknown amount of time, she looked for the child and found her in the backyard in the pool. The mother attempted to retrieve the child from the pool, but was unable to swim and could not reach the child. It is not believed that the mother got in the pool to retrieve the child. The sister heard the mother screaming for help and ran out into the backyard, jumping in the pool and retrieving the victim child. The sibling attempted cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) on the child but she was unable to be revived. Emergency medical services arrived at the home and also performed CPR, but were also not able to revive the child and she was pronounced dead.

The agency began their investigation immediately and was able to see the sister within 24 hours, and then again at school. The family was very difficult to coordinate with, and the caseworkers often arrived at the home, and though it appeared that someone was there, no one would answer the door. The agency offered [REDACTED] to the parents, but they were declined. The agency worked with the school [REDACTED] for the sister.

The parents had initially denied any drug use, but the mother did test positive for marijuana and the breakdown of cocaine. The father refused a drug test, but admitted to using cocaine prior to the date of the incident. It was determined that the sister was not in a caregiver role at the time of the incident and did not have responsibility in assuring that the victim child was supervised.

Lancaster County CYA filed their investigation assessment outcome with ChildLine on 06/27/2017 with a status of [REDACTED] for serious physical neglect. [REDACTED] is named as the perpetrator. [REDACTED] was found to be under the influence of cocaine and marijuana and did not properly supervise the victim child as she got out of the home and into the pool. On 08/29/2017, [REDACTED] Police Department filed charges against both the mother and the father. Both parents were charged with Endangering the Welfare of Children –

Parent/Guardian/Other Commits Offense as it was determined that the mother was under the influence of cocaine and marijuana and the father admitted to using cocaine in the days leading up to the event. Both parents posted bail and are awaiting preliminary hearings.

The agency closed their case as the parents did not wish to participate in services and were [REDACTED] for the sister of the victim child.

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:

An immediate response tag was assigned to this case.

Agency followed up with the family and assessed the safety and wellbeing of the other child in the home.

The agency was prompt with their investigation and no delays occurred during the assessment period.

A very collaborative investigation has occurred for this case.

The Agency was persistent with its efforts to interview all family members.

The Agency will continue to provide supportive services to the family until case closure and will explore [REDACTED] resources for all family members.

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

None noted.

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

Exploring [REDACTED] resources for the entire family to help the family [REDACTED]

When working with families in the future that have pools, review pool safety and encourage a double safety system (pool fenced in within the fence of the area).

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

None noted.

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

None noted.

Department Review of County Internal Report:

The Central Region Office received the Lancaster County Child Fatality Team Report on 07/24/2017. The Department finds the county's internal report as an accurate reflection of the Act 33 meeting. The report content and findings are representative of what was discussed during the meeting on 05/24/2017. As case activity continued beyond the Act 33 meeting, there are findings that are not incorporated into the county report and will be addressed by the Department's findings. Written feedback was provided to Lancaster County Administration on 07/24/2017.

Department of Human Services Findings:

County Strengths:

The agency made multiple attempts to meet with the family at the onset of the report. These efforts all included police collaboration until the safety of the home could be assured.

The agency workers met with the sister of the victim child multiple times in multiple settings to assure that information remained consistent and that the child was getting the support needed after the incident.

County Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted in the agency's handling of the case.

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

3130.21(b) – The closing safety assessment worksheet, completed on 06/27/2017, stated that the child had not been seen since 05/18/2017, which is beyond the 30 day timeframe set forth in the Safety Assessment and Management Process. It does appear that the agency made one attempt to see the child in the correct timeframe, but did not follow up beyond this.

The item noted above has been cited on a subsequent Licensing Inspection Summary after the date that this area of non-compliance

occurred. As such, the agency has submitted a Plan of Correction to rectify this item and will not be cited; currently, for this specific occurrence.

Department of Human Services Recommendations:

None noted currently.