

Report Identification Number: AL-17-008

Prepared by: New York State Office of Children & Family Services

Issue Date: Jul 11, 2017

This report, prepared pursuant to section 20(5) of the Social Services Law (SSL), concerns:

- A report made to the New York Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR) involving the death of a child.
- The death of a child for whom child protective services has an open case.
- The death of a child whose care and custody or custody and guardianship has been transferred to an authorized agency.
- The death of a child for whom the local department of social services has an open preventive service case.

The Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) is mandated by section 20 of the SSL to investigate or cause for the investigation of the cause and circumstances surrounding the death, review such investigation, and prepare and issue a fatality report in regard to the categories of deaths noted above involving a child, except where a local or regional fatality review team issues a report, as authorized by law.

Such report must include: the cause of death; the identification of child protective or other services provided or actions taken regard to such child and child's family; any extraordinary or pertinent information concerning the circumstances of the child's death; whether the child or the child's family received assistance, care or services from the social services district prior to the child's death; any action or further investigation undertaken by OCFS or the social services district since the child's death; and as appropriate, recommendations for local or state administrative or policy changes.

This report contains no information that would identify the deceased child, his or her siblings, the parent, parents, or other persons legally responsible for the child, and any members of the deceased child's household.

By statute, this report will be forwarded to the social services district, chief county executive officer, chairperson of the local legislative body of the county where the child died and the social services district that had legal custody of the child, if different. Notice of the issuance of this report will be sent to the Speaker of the Assembly and the Temporary President of the Senate of the State of New York.

This report may **only** be disclosed to the public by OCFS pursuant to section 20(5) of the SSL. **It may be released by OCFS only after OCFS has determined that such disclosure is not contrary to the best interests of the deceased child's siblings or other children in the household.**

OCFS' review included an examination of actions taken by individual caseworkers and supervisors within the social services district and agencies under contract with the social services district. The observations and recommendations contained in this report reflect OCFS' assessment and the performance of these agencies.



Abbreviations

Relationships

BM-Biological Mother	SM-Subject Mother	SC-Subject Child
BF-Biological Father	SF-Subject Father	OC-Other Child
MGM-Maternal Grand Mother	MGF-Maternal Grand Father	FF-Foster Father
PGM-Paternal Grand Mother	PGF-Paternal Grand Father	DCP-Day Care Provider
MGGM-Maternal Great Grand Mother	MGGF-Maternal Great Grand Father	PGGF-Paternal Great Grand Father
PGGM-Paternal Great Grand Mother	MA/MU-Maternal Aunt/Maternal Uncle	PA/PU-Paternal Aunt/Paternal Uncle
FM-Foster Mother	SS-Surviving Sibling	

Contacts

LE-Law Enforcement	CW-Case Worker	CP-Case Planner
Dr.-Doctor	ME-Medical Examiner	EMS-Emergency Medical Services
DC-Day Care	FD-Fire Department	BM-Biological Mother
CPR-Cardio-pulmonary Resuscitation		

Allegations

FX-Fractures	II-Internal Injuries	L/B/W-Lacerations/Bruises/Welts
S/D/S-Swelling/Dislocation/Sprains	C/T/S-Choking/Twisting/Shaking	B/S-Burns/Scalding
P/Nx-Poisoning/ Noxious Substance	XCP-Excessive Corporal Punishment	PD/AM-Parent's Drug Alcohol Misuse
CD/A-Child's Drug/Alcohol Use	LMC-Lack of Medical Care	EdN-Educational Neglect
EN-Emotional Neglect	SA-Sexual Abuse	M/FTTH-Malnutrition/Failure-to-thrive
IF/C/S-Inadequate Food/ Clothing/ Shelter	IG-Inadequate Guardianship	LS-Lack of Supervision
Ab-Abandonment	OTH/COI-Others	

Miscellaneous

IND-Indicated	UNF-Unfounded	SO-Sexual Offender
Sub-Substantiated	Unsub-Unsubstantiated	DV-Domestic Violence
LDSS-Local Department of Social Service	ACS-Administration for Children's Services	NYPD-New York City Police Department
PPRS-Purchased Preventive Rehabilitative Services	TANF-Temporary Assistance to Needy Families	FC-Foster Care
MH-Mental Health	ER-Emergency Room	

Case Information



Report Type: Child Deceased
Age: 1 month(s)

Jurisdiction: Washington
Gender: Male

Date of Death: 02/15/2017
Initial Date OCFS Notified: 02/16/2017

Presenting Information

On 2/15/17, at approximately 7:30PM, SF put one-month-old male SC in a bassinet to sleep. SM checked on SC at approximately 9:30PM, and SC was face down and unresponsive. SM attempted CPR on SC, and then called 911. SC had no visible injuries and no pre-existing medical concerns. The parents did not provide an explanation for SC's condition, and SC died on the way to the hospital via ambulance. The two SS had unknown roles.

Executive Summary

This fatality report concerns the death of a 1-month-old male (SC) that occurred on 2/16/17. A report was made to the SCR on that same date, with allegations of IG and DOA/Fatality against SM and SF. Washington County Department of Social Services (WCDSS) conducted a thorough investigation surrounding SC's death. At the time of this writing, neither the Death Certificate nor Autopsy were available; however, the Preliminary Autopsy noted the cause of death as "Sudden Infant Death Syndrome."

At the time of the fatality, SM and SF resided with their three children: SC, and two SS (2 and 1-year old). SM reported regular prenatal care and that SC was born healthy, but with on-going concerns regarding muscle tightness, which were followed up with regularly by a chiropractor. At the time of SC's death, he was deemed healthy with no medical concerns; both SS were up to date medically. WCDSS determined neither SM nor SF had histories of substance use, domestic violence, or mental health concerns.

On the date of the incident, it was discovered that SF swaddled SC and placed him in a bassinet to sleep at approximately 7:00PM. SF reported he placed SC on his side in the bassinet, with a rolled up crocheted blanket behind SC's back. SF then left the residence, leaving SM with all three children. SM reported she went to check on SC for the first time since SF left at approximately 9:40PM; SC was face down in the bassinet, unresponsive, and had fluid coming from his mouth. SM reported she carried SC to the main floor of the home and started CPR. She also called 911 and then SF to return home. SC was transported by ambulance to the hospital, and was pronounced deceased at 10:45PM.

From the time the investigation began to the time it was determined, WCDSS met regularly with the family, assessed the home environment, spoke with many collateral contacts, and offered the family appropriate services; however, the family declined services at that time. WCDSS found no evidence to support the allegations in the report, and appropriately unsubstantiated the investigation.

Findings Related to the CPS Investigation of the Fatality

Safety Assessment:

- **Was sufficient information gathered to make the decision recorded on the:**
 - **Approved Initial Safety Assessment?**

Yes



- Safety assessment due at the time of determination? Yes
- Was the safety decision on the approved Initial Safety Assessment appropriate? Yes

Determination:

- Was sufficient information gathered to make determination(s) for all allegations as well as any others identified in the course of the investigation? Yes, sufficient information was gathered to determine all allegations.
- Was the determination made by the district to unfound or indicate appropriate? Yes

Explain:

WCDSS' decision to close the case was appropriate, and the casework activity was commensurate with the case circumstances.

Was the decision to close the case appropriate? Yes

Was casework activity commensurate with appropriate and relevant statutory or regulatory requirements? Yes

Was there sufficient documentation of supervisory consultation? Yes, the case record has detail of the consultation.

Explain:

At the close of the investigation, WCDSS had conducted a thorough and complete assessment of safety, risk, and the circumstances surrounding SC's death. Appropriate services were offered to the family, but declined.

Required Actions Related to the Fatality

Are there Required Actions related to the compliance issue(s)? Yes No

Fatality-Related Information and Investigative Activities

Incident Information

Date of Death: 02/15/2017

Time of Death: 10:45 PM

Time of fatal incident, if different than time of death: Unknown

County where fatality incident occurred: WASHINGTON

Was 911 or local emergency number called? Yes

Time of Call: Unknown

Did EMS to respond to the scene? Yes

At time of incident leading to death, had child used alcohol or drugs? No

Child's activity at time of incident:

- Sleeping
- Working
- Driving / Vehicle occupant
- Playing
- Eating
- Unknown
- Other



Did child have supervision at time of incident leading to death? Yes
How long before incident was the child last seen by caretaker? 2 Hours
Is the caretaker listed in the Household Composition? Yes - Caregiver
 2
At time of incident supervisor was: Not impaired.

Total number of deaths at incident event:
Children ages 0-18: 1
Adults: 0

Household Composition at time of Fatality

Household	Relationship	Role	Gender	Age
Deceased Child's Household	Deceased Child	Alleged Victim	Male	1 Month(s)
Deceased Child's Household	Father	Alleged Perpetrator	Male	31 Year(s)
Deceased Child's Household	Mother	Alleged Perpetrator	Female	31 Year(s)
Deceased Child's Household	Sibling	No Role	Female	1 Year(s)
Deceased Child's Household	Sibling	No Role	Male	3 Year(s)

LDSS Response

On 2/16/17, WCDSS received an SCR report regarding the death of SC. WCDSS initiated their investigation within 24 hours, and coordinated their efforts with LE and other members of their Multi-Disciplinary Team. On this same date, WCDSS completed a CPS history check both in New York State and the State of Missouri, where the family previously resided; no history was found. Also on this date, WCDSS and LE completed a home visit and initial interviews with SM and SF. A detailed timeline of events was obtained, the home was assessed for safety with no concerns noted, and sleeping provisions were observed to be appropriate for SC and the two SS. WCDSS also observed the SS at the time of this home visit, and assessed them both to be safe. WCDSS promptly offered SM and SF services, but they declined.

WCDSS spoke with the source of both reports, First Responders, LE, and hospital staff regarding SC's death. An MDT meeting took place on 2/17/17 to discuss the case circumstances. It was discovered SC had been seeing a chiropractor regarding muscle tightness, and WCDSS followed up with the provider; no concerns were noted regarding the care of SC and all treatment recommendations were followed by the parents. SC responded well to the chiropractic treatment and was ultimately referred to return to the chiropractor on an as needed basis only. WCDSS also received SC's birth records, SC and SS pediatric records, and SM's prenatal records, none of which noted any concerns. All collateral contacts spoken with informed WCDSS there was nothing to indicate any maltreatment or abuse to SC that would have caused his death. WCDSS obtained information from medical providers that the parents would place SC on his back to sleep; however, the parents reported to WCDSS that they placed the swaddled SC on his side with a rolled blanket behind his back, and the record was not clear there was a discussion with them surrounding their safe sleep education/practices prior to SC's death. WCDSS spoke with LE, who informed WCDSS the Preliminary Autopsy noted the cause of death as "Sudden Infant Death Syndrome". WCDSS made several attempts to obtain the Official Autopsy; however, it was not available at the time of this writing.

By the conclusion of the investigation, WCDSS completed all necessary assessments/reports on time, evaluated the



family's need for services, completed home visits and assessed the safety of the SS on more than one occasion, and spoke with an abundance of collateral contacts. WCDSS appropriately unfounded the allegations in the report and referred the family to community-based services.

Official Manner and Cause of Death

Official Manner: Pending

Primary Cause of Death: Undetermined if injury or medical cause

Person Declaring Official Manner and Cause of Death: Medical Examiner

Multidisciplinary Investigation/Review

Was the fatality investigation conducted by a Multidisciplinary Team (MDT)? Yes

Comments: This investigation was conducted by the WCDSS MDT.

Was the fatality reviewed by an OCFS approved Child Fatality Review Team? Yes

Comments: This fatality was reviewed by WCDSS' OCFS approved Child Fatality Review Team.

SCR Fatality Report Summary

Alleged Victim(s)	Alleged Perpetrator(s)	Allegation(s)	Allegation Outcome
038801 - Deceased Child, Male, 1 Mons	038805 - Father, Male, 31 Year(s)	Inadequate Guardianship	Unsubstantiated
038801 - Deceased Child, Male, 1 Mons	038805 - Father, Male, 31 Year(s)	DOA / Fatality	Unsubstantiated
038801 - Deceased Child, Male, 1 Mons	038804 - Mother, Female, 31 Year(s)	DOA / Fatality	Unsubstantiated
038801 - Deceased Child, Male, 1 Mons	038804 - Mother, Female, 31 Year(s)	Inadequate Guardianship	Unsubstantiated

CPS Fatality Casework/Investigative Activities

	Yes	No	N/A	Unable to Determine
All children observed?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When appropriate, children were interviewed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alleged subject(s) interviewed face-to-face?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All 'other persons named' interviewed face-to-face?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contact with source?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All appropriate Collaterals contacted?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Was a death-scene investigation performed?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was there discussion with all parties (youth, other household members, and staff) who were present that day (if nonverbal, observation and comments in case notes)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coordination of investigation with law enforcement?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was there timely entry of progress notes and other required documentation?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional information:

WCSSS conducted a thorough investigation which included obtaining information from all persons named on the report and all appropriate collateral contacts.

Fatality Safety Assessment Activities

	Yes	No	N/A	Unable to Determine
Were there any surviving siblings or other children in the household?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was there an adequate safety assessment of impending or immediate danger to surviving siblings/other children in the household named in the report:				
Within 24 hours?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
At 7 days?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
At 30 days?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was there an approved Initial Safety Assessment for all surviving siblings/ other children in the household within 24 hours?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there any safety issues that need to be referred back to the local district?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

When safety factors were present that placed the surviving siblings/other children in the household in impending or immediate danger of serious harm, were the safety interventions, including parent/caretaker actions adequate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Fatality Risk Assessment / Risk Assessment Profile

	Yes	No	N/A	Unable to Determine
Was the risk assessment/RAP adequate in this case?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
During the course of the investigation, was sufficient information gathered to assess risk to all surviving siblings/other children in the household?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was there an adequate assessment of the family's need for services?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Did the protective factors in this case require the LDSS to file a petition in Family Court at any time during or after the investigation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Were appropriate/needed services offered in this case	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Placement Activities in Response to the Fatality Investigation

	Yes	No	N/A	Unable to Determine
Did the safety factors in the case show the need for the surviving siblings/other children in the household be removed or placed in foster care at any time during this fatality investigation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Were there surviving siblings/other children in the household removed as a result of this fatality report/investigation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Explain as necessary:
There were no surviving children that were removed as a result of this investigation.

Legal Activity Related to the Fatality

Was there legal activity as a result of the fatality investigation? There was no legal activity.

Services Provided to the Family in Response to the Fatality

Services	Provided After Death	Offered, but Refused	Offered, Unknown if Used	Needed but not Offered	Needed but Unavailable	N/A	CDR Lead to Referral
Bereavement counseling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Economic support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Funeral arrangements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mental health services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foster care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legal services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Homemaking Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parenting Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Domestic Violence Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Early Intervention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alcohol/Substance abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child Care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intensive case management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family or others as safety resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional information, if necessary:
 WCDSS offered the family grief counseling services, but SM and SF declined. WCDSS asked SM and SF if there were any other services they felt they needed or were interested in and SM and SF both denied; SM and SF reported ample support via familial resources.

Were services provided to siblings or other children in the household to address any immediate needs and support their well-being in response to the fatality? No

Explain:

WCDSS offered the SM and SF a grief counseling referral for the SS, but the offer was declined.

Were services provided to parent(s) and other care givers to address any immediate needs related to the fatality? No

Explain:

WCDSS offered SM and SF a grief counseling referral as well as any other additional services they felt they may need, but the offers were declined.

History Prior to the Fatality

Child Information

- Did the child have a history of alleged child abuse/maltreatment?** No
- Was there an open CPS case with this child at the time of death?** No
- Was the child ever placed outside of the home prior to the death?** No
- Were there any siblings ever placed outside of the home prior to this child's death?** No
- Was the child acutely ill during the two weeks before death?** No

Infants Under One Year Old

During pregnancy, mother:

- Had medical complications / infections
- Misused over-the-counter or prescription drugs
- Experienced domestic violence
- Was not noted in the case record to have any of the issues listed
- Had heavy alcohol use
- Smoked tobacco
- Used illicit drugs



Infant was born:

Drug exposed

With fetal alcohol effects or syndrome

With neither of the issues listed noted in case record

CPS - Investigative History Three Years Prior to the Fatality

There is no CPS investigative history in NYS within three years prior to the fatality.

CPS - Investigative History More Than Three Years Prior to the Fatality

There is no CPS history more than three years prior to the fatality regarding this family.

Known CPS History Outside of NYS

There is no known CPS history outside of NYS.

Required Action(s)

Are there Required Actions related to compliance issues for provisions of CPS or Preventive services ?

Yes No

Preventive Services History

There is no record of Preventive Services History provided to the deceased child, the deceased child's siblings, and/or the other children residing in the deceased child's household at the time of the fatality.

Legal History Within Three Years Prior to the Fatality

Was there any legal activity within three years prior to the fatality investigation? There was no legal activity

Recommended Action(s)

Are there any recommended actions for local or state administrative or policy changes? Yes No

Are there any recommended prevention activities resulting from the review? Yes No