

Report Identification Number: SV-16-028

Prepared by: Spring Valley Regional Office

Issue Date: May 10, 2017

Thi	s report, prepared pursuant to section 20(5) of the Social Services Law (SSL), concerns:
X	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 <u>only</u> 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					
DrDoctor	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	ACS-Administration for Children's	NYPD-New York City Police					
Service	Services	Department					
PPRS-Purchased Preventive Rehabilitative Services	TANF-Temporary Assistance to Needy Families	FC-Foster Care					
MH-Mental Health	ER-Emergency Room						

Case Information

SV-16-028 FINAL Page 2 of 12



Report Type: Child Deceased **Jurisdiction:** Dutchess **Date of Death:** 06/13/2015

Age: 3 month(s) Gender: Female Initial Date OCFS Notified: 06/13/2015

Presenting Information

On 07/08/2016, the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment received a report with the following information: Sometime last year in 2015, the father slept in the same bed with unknown infant baby. The father rolled over on the infant. As a result, the infant suffocated and died. The infant did not have any preexisting medical conditions that would have contributed to her death. The mother recently gave birth to another child. The mother and father had another child removed from their care due to the mother's abuse of drugs and due to the death of the infant.

Executive Summary

On 07/08/2016, the Dutchess County Department of Community and Family Services (DCDCFS) received a report of abuse/neglect from the SCR which was a re-report of the death of a child that had expired on 06/13/2015. After reviewing the information provided, it was determined that there was no new information to add to the previous investigation. The initial report was received on 06/13/2015. The allegations on the report were DOA/Fatality and Inadequate Guardianship and the subject of the report was the father. The report alleged that the father slept in the same bed as the four-month-old child and was responsible for her care. The father awoke the morning of 06/13/2015 and found the child unresponsive. The child was an otherwise healthy child as she had no preexisting medical conditions that could have contributed to her death. The mother, as well as other family members, was listed on the report with an Unknown role. An autopsy conducted by the Medical Examiner's Office listed the cause of death as undetermined (co-sleeping with an adult in an adult bed with soft bedding) and the manner of death as undetermined.

The CPS investigation was conducted by DCDCFS. DCDCFS made contact with the source of the report, law enforcement, the District Attorney's office, the medical examiner and the child's pediatrician, the father's counselor and the mother's probation officer. Multiple interviews were conducted with the parents, the maternal grandparents and the maternal aunt, as well as the maternal uncle. The maternal aunt's one-year old infant was observed multiple times and no concerns were noted. The District Attorney's office stated that there would be no criminal charges filed. During multiple interviews with the parents, the father stated that he was extremely high/intoxicated in the evening before the fatality. The father admitted to taking his prescription medication along with alcohol, marijuana and another medication that was not prescribed to him. The father admitted that he engaged in this practice regularly, but stated that on 06/12/2015, he was higher than normal. The mother was aware that the father abused drugs regularly and that he had abused drugs on the evening of 06/13/2015. In spite of this, the mother regularly left the father as the sole caretaker for the child and did so on 06/13/2015. The father admitted multiple times during the interview that he was extremely impaired the night of 06/12/2015. He also admitted that he probably rolled over on the child because he was a hard sleeper. The mother also repeatedly said throughout the investigation that what the father did was an accident. Based on these circumstances, on 08/12/2015, the allegations of DOA/Fatality and Inadequate Guardianship were indicated against the father. The allegations of DOA/Fatality, Inadequate Guardianship and Lack of Supervision were added and indicated against the mother and the allegation of Parent's Drug/Alcohol Misuse was added and indicated against the father. The initial investigation was closed on 08/12/2015 and the current investigation was closed on 09/06/2016.

The progress notes, safety assessments, 24-Hour and 30-Day Child Fatality Summary Reports as well as the Risk Assessment Profile were completed thoroughly and appropriately. Multiple case conferences were held and medical

SV-16-028 FINAL Page 3 of 12



records were reviewed which confirmed that the subject child had no previous health problems and that both parents were given information regarding Safe Sleep. The mother received appropriate pre-natal and medical care and admitted receiving information on Safe Sleeping practices. Bereavement and burial assistance information was provided to the family as well as a referral for a substance abuse screening, which was refused by the parents.

Findings Related to the CPS Investigation of the Fatality

Safety Assessment:

Was sufficient information gathered to make the decision recorded on

Approved Initial Safety Assessment?

Yes

Safety assessment due at the time of determination?

Yes

Was the safety decision on the approved Initial Safety Assessment

Yes

appropriate?

Determination:

Was sufficient information gathered to make determination(s) for all allegations as well as any others identified in the course of the

Yes, sufficient information was gathered to determine all

allegations.

Was the determination made by the district to unfound or indicate

appropriate?

Yes

Was the decision to close the case appropriate?

Yes

Was casework activity commensurate with appropriate and relevant statutory Yes

or regulatory requirements?

investigation?

Was there sufficient documentation of supervisory consultation?

Yes, the case record has detail of the

consultation.

Explain:

n/a

Required Actions Related to the Fatality

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

Fatality-Related Information and Investigative Activities

Incident Information

Date of Death: 06/13/2015 Time of Death: Unknown

Time of fatal incident, if different than time of death: 08:30 AM

DUTCHESS County where fatality incident occurred:

Was 911 or local emergency number called? Yes

SV-16-028 FINAL Page 4 of 12



08:44 AM				
	Yes			
i, had child used alcohol or drug	s? No			
☐ Working	☐ Driving / Vehicle occupant			
☑ Eating	☐ Unknown			
of incident leading to death? Yes	3			
hold Composition? Yes - Caregiv	/er			
☐ Absent				
⊠ Asleep				
☐ Impaired by illness				
☐ Other:				
event:				
	☐ Working ☑ Eating of incident leading to death? Yes hold Composition? Yes - Caregive ☐ Absent ☑ Asleep ☐ Impaired by illness ☐ Other:			

Household Composition at time of Fatality

Household	Relationship	Role	Gender	Age
Deceased Child's Household	Aunt/Uncle	No Role	Female	25 Year(s)
Deceased Child's Household	Deceased Child	Alleged Victim	Female	3 Month(s)
Deceased Child's Household	Father	Alleged Perpetrator	Male	42 Year(s)
Deceased Child's Household	Grandparent	No Role	Female	53 Year(s)
Deceased Child's Household	Grandparent	No Role	Male	49 Year(s)
Deceased Child's Household	Mother	Alleged Perpetrator	Female	30 Year(s)
Deceased Child's Household	Other Child	No Role	Female	1 Year(s)

LDSS Response

On 07/08/2016, DCDCFS received a report from the SCR which was a re-report of the death of the subject child (SC) that had expired on 06/13/2015. It was determined that there was no new information with regard to the fatality and the activities of the initial investigation were thoroughly documented in the current investigation's progress notes. The initial investigation revealed that upon receipt of the SCR report on 06/13/2015, the DCDCFS Caseworker met with Law Enforcement and sat in on their interview of the parents. The Caseworker also conducted separate interviews with the parents, maternal grandmother and the maternal aunt, and also observed the aunt's one-year-old infant child. A home visit was made and the sleeping arrangements were observed. The SC had no surviving siblings in the home. The Caseworker suggested to the maternal aunt that she should not co-sleep with the one-year-old infant and suggested that she use the pack and play that was observed in the home. The aunt agreed. DCDCFS later purchased a toddler bed for the one-year-



old.

During the course of the initial investigation, multiple home visits were made to the case address and all family members were eventually interviewed. The parents were also interviewed at the DSS field office. The investigation revealed that on the evening of 06/12/2015, the father engaged in drug use in the form of marijuana, crushed prescription pills and alcohol and then took his prescribed psychotropic medication as well. He stated he woke up the next morning at 7:30am and gave the SC a bottle which he propped up under a folded blanket. He then went back to sleep. When he woke up again he observed the SC lying on her stomach and she was cold to the touch. Emergency Services (911) were called and when the EMTs arrived the SC had no vital signs and was transported to the hospital.

Friends of the family were also interviewed. The family was provided with information on bereavement counseling and burial assistance information. The parents were referred for counseling and a substance abuse screening, which they refused. The Caseworker conferred with the District Attorney's office, the Medical Examiner and the SC's pediatrician, as well as the father's psychiatric counselor and the mother's probation officer. The Caseworker checked for any previous CPS, WMS and criminal history on all family members and documented the findings. The Caseworker reviewed the EMS documentation and the SC's pediatric medical records which document that Safe Sleep practices were reviewed with the parents.

The case was presented at MDT meetings on 06/16/2015 and 07/28/2015. There were also multiple internal case conferences as well as a telephone case conference with OCFS on 07/02/2015. The safety assessments and the 24-Hour and 30-Day Child Fatality Summary Reports were completed and approved timely. The safety factors noted on the safety assessments were appropriate to the circumstances. The Risk Assessment Profile was completely thoroughly and appropriately. The allegations of DOA/Fatality and Inadequate Guardianship were indicated against the father. After a review of the case circumstances, an allegation of Parent's Drug/Alcohol Misuse was added and indicated against the father and allegations of DOA/Fatality, Inadequate Guardianship and Lack of Supervision were added and indicated against the mother. The initial CPS investigation was closed on 08/12/2015.

The current investigation was initiated as the mother had recently given birth to another child and there was knowledge of a fatality the previous year. DCDCFS removed the newborn child based on the results of the most recent fatality investigation and the parent's failure to follow through with mental health treatment and substance abuse evaluations. The child was placed in Article 10 custody and Neglect Petitions have been filed against the parents. The current investigation was indicated and opened on 09/06/2016.

Official Manner and Cause of Death

Official Manner: Pending

Primary Cause of Death: Unknown

Person Declaring Official Manner and Cause of Death: Medical Examiner

Multidisciplinary Investigation/Review

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

Was the fatality reviewed by an OCFS approved Child Fatality Review Team? No



Alleged Victim(s)	Alleged Perpetrator(s)	Allegation(s)	Allegation Outcome
034101 - Deceased Child, Female, 3 Mons	034103 - Father, Male, 42 Year(s)	DOA / Fatality	Substantiated
034101 - Deceased Child, Female, 3 Mons	034103 - Father, Male, 42 Year(s)	Parents Drug / Alcohol Misuse	Substantiated
034101 - Deceased Child, Female, 3 Mons	034106 - Mother, Female, 30 Year(s)	Lack of Supervision	Substantiated
034101 - Deceased Child, Female, 3 Mons	034106 - Mother, Female, 30 Year(s)	DOA / Fatality	Substantiated
034101 - Deceased Child, Female, 3 Mons	034106 - Mother, Female, 30 Year(s)	Inadequate Guardianship	Substantiated
034101 - Deceased Child, Female, 3 Mons	034103 - Father, Male, 42 Year(s)	Inadequate Guardianship	Substantiated

CPS Fatality Casework/Investigative Activities

	Yes	No	N/A	Unable to Determine
All children observed?	\boxtimes			
When appropriate, children were interviewed?	×			
Alleged subject(s) interviewed face-to-face?	×			
All 'other persons named' interviewed face-to-face?			×	
Contact with source?	×			
All appropriate Collaterals contacted?	×			
Was a death-scene investigation performed?			×	
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)?	×			
Coordination of investigation with law enforcement?	×			
Was there timely entry of progress notes and other required documentation?	×			

Fatality Safety Assessment Activities

	Yes	No	I Ν/Δ	Unable to Determine		
Were there any surviving siblings or other children in the household?	\boxtimes					
Was there an adequate safety assessment of impending or immediate danger to surviving siblings/other children						

SV-16-028 FINAL Page 7 of 12



in the household named in the report:				
Within 24 hours?	X			
At 7 days?	X			
At 30 days?	×			
Was there an approved Initial Safety Assessment for all surviving siblings/ other children in the household within 24 hours?	X			
Are there any safety issues that need to be referred back to the local district?		X		
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?			×	
Fatality Risk Assessment / Risk Assessm	ent Profile			
v				
	Yes	No	N/A	Unable to Determine
Was the risk assessment/RAP adequate in this case?	X			
During the course of the investigation, was sufficient information gathered to assess risk to all surviving siblings/other children in the household?	×			
Was there an adequate assessment of the family's need for services?	×			
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?	×			
Were appropriate/needed services offered in this case	X			
Placement Activities in Response to the Fatal	ity Investigat	ion		
	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?		X		
Were there surviving siblings/other children in the household removed as a result of this fatality report/investigation?	X			
If Yes, court ordered?	X			
Explain as necessary: The subject child's sibling was removed based on the current fatality investigation.	tigation. The	e removal v	vas based o	n both

SV-16-028 FINAL Page 8 of 12



parents' failure to follow through with mental health treatment and substance abuse evaluations. The subject child's sibling was removed and placed in Article 10 custody.

	Legal Activity Related to the Fatality								
Was there legal activity as a result of the fatality investigation? ☑Family Court ☐Criminal Court ☐Order of Protection									
Family Court	Petition Type: FCA Article 1	0 - CPS							
Date Filed:	Fact Finding Description:	Disposition Description	:						
Unknown	Adjudicated Neglected	Direct Custody Transferr	red toContinued with Non-Relative (Article 10)						
Respondent:	034106 Mother Female 30 Ye	ear(s)							
Comments:									
F 9 6 /		o and							
Family Court	Petition Type: FCA Article 1	0 - CPS							
Date Filed:	Fact Finding Description:	Disposition Description	:						
Unknown	Adjudicated Neglected	Direct Custody Transferr	red toContinued with Non-Relative (Article 10)						
Respondent:	034103 Father Male 42 Year	(s)							
Comments:									

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 Unavaliable	N/A	CDR Lead to Referral
Bereavement counseling		X					
Economic support						×	
Funeral arrangements	X						
Housing assistance						×	
Mental health services						×	
Foster care						×	
Health care						×	
Legal services						×	
Family planning						×	
Homemaking Services						×	
Parenting Skills						×	

SV-16-028 FINAL Page 9 of 12



 \square Drug exposed

SV-16-028

Child Fatality Report

Domestic Violence Services						X	
Early Intervention						X	
Alcohol/Substance abuse		X					
Child Care						×	
Intensive case management						×	
Family or others as safety resources						×	
Other						X	
Explain: DCDCFS removed the newborn child to follow through with mental health custody and Neglect Petitions have be were services provided to parent(s) fatality? No Explain: The parents refused services.	reatment an een filed.	nd substance	abuse eval	uations. The	child was pla	aced in Artic	cle 10
	Hist	ory Prior	to the Fat	tality			
		Child Inf	ormation				
Did the child have a history of alleged child abuse/maltreatment? 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? Yes Was the child acutely ill during the two weeks before death? No							
	Ir	nfants Under	One Year C	Old			
During pregnancy, mother: ☐ Had medical complications / infect ☐ Misused over-the-counter or prescond Experienced domestic violence ☐ Was not noted in the case record to Infant was born:	ription drug		 	□ Had heavy ☑ Smoked to □ Used illici	bacco		

☐ With fetal alcohol effects or syndrome

FINAL Page 10 of 12



☑ 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

The mother was listed as a subject in an SCR report dated 10/27/2009. The allegation was Parent's Drug/Alcohol Misuse. The maltreated child was the deceased child's older half-sibling who was a newborn and had a positive toxicology test for drugs. The allegation was substantiated. This child was removed and eventually freed for adoption.

The father was listed as a subject in two SCR reports dating 09/18/2007 and 04/22/2009. The allegations were Inadequate Guardianship, Lack of Supervision, Parent's Drug/Alcohol Misuse. The maltreated children were the deceased child's older half-siblings. The allegations of the report dated 09/18/2007 dated 9/18/2007 were substantiated. The allegations of the report dated 04/22/2009 were unfounded.

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 th	ree years prior to the fatality investigat	tion?
☑Family Court	□Criminal Court	☐Order of Protection

Family Court Pe	tition Type: SSL 384a - Transfer of Custody	
Date Filed:	Fact Finding Description:	Disposition Description:
Unknown	Court Approved Surrender	There was not a disposition
Respondent:	None	
Comments:		

SV-16-028 FINAL Page 11 of 12



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