



Report Identification Number: BU-22-002

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

Issue Date: Jun 30, 2022

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	PS-Parent Sub
CH/CHN-Child/Children	OA-Other Adult	
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
CPS-Child Protective Services		
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-Other	
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	COS-Court Ordered Services
OP-Order of Protection	RAP-Risk Assessment Profile	FASP-Family Assessment Plan
FAR-Family Assessment Response	Hx-History	Tx-Treatment
CAC-Child Advocacy Center	PIP-Program Improvement Plan	yo- year(s) old
CPR-Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation	ASTO-Allowing Sex Abuse to Occur	



Case Information

Report Type: Child Deceased
Age: 26 day(s)

Jurisdiction: Erie
Gender: Male

Date of Death: 01/30/2022
Initial Date OCFS Notified: 02/01/2022

Presenting Information

Erie County Department of Social Services (ECDSS) received an SCR report which alleged the mother (SM) and father (SF) placed the 3-week-old child (SC) in the adult bed with them. At approximately 12:00 AM, the mother fed the child and then placed him next to her, between she and the father, to sleep. The mother woke up and checked on the child at approximately 3:45 AM and found the child unresponsive. The mother and father called 911 and initiated CPR. The child was pronounced deceased in the home by emergency medical personnel.

Executive Summary

This report concerns the death of a 3-week-old child which occurred while in the care of his parents. ECDSS received the SCR report, coordinated their response with law enforcement, and notified the district attorney and medical examiner of their involvement in the case.

ECDSS was informed by law enforcement that the mother fed the child at approximately 12:00 AM and placed him to sleep on the adult bed between the father and herself. The mother awoke at approximately 3:45 AM and found the child unresponsive and alerted the father. The father stated the child was bluish in color, and stiff when he began CPR. First responders arrived at the home and took over CPR from the parents, and it was clear the child had passed away. The child was pronounced dead in the home at 3:51 AM.

The mother and father were interviewed in the home and confirmed the events of the fatal incident as law enforcement had reported to ECDSS. The mother and father stated they had received safe sleep education from their pediatrician and that the child usually slept in the bassinet adjacent to their bed. The mother stated she placed the child to sleep in the bed with them because he was fussy and stopped crying when being held.

ECDSS interviewed the child’s pediatrician who confirmed they provided education on safe sleep practices to the parents during a visit on 1/17/2022. There were no concerns for the child in the care of the parents identified.

The medical examiner was interviewed by ECDSS and stated the cause of death was most likely due to co-sleeping with the parents. The final autopsy report and official cause of death were pending at the time the investigation was closed.

The allegations of DOA/Fatality and Inadequate Guardianship against the parents regarding the child were substantiated due to the parents’ failure to provide a minimum degree of care by placing the child in an unsafe sleep environment and the investigation was closed. The parents were provided with information for counseling, though the case record did not reflect whether the parents were engaged in the services prior to the investigation closing.

Findings Related to the CPS Investigation of the Fatality

Safety Assessment:

- **Was sufficient information gathered to make the decision recorded on the:**



Safety assessment due at the time of determination? 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

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:
The case record contains detailed documentation of supervisory consultation and a determination of the allegations was made in congruence with the evidence gathered.

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: 01/30/2022

Time of Death: 03:51 AM

Time of fatal incident, if different than time of death: 12:00 AM

County where fatality incident occurred: Erie

Was 911 or local emergency number called? Yes

Time of Call: 03:40 AM

Did EMS 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? 3 Hours

At time of incident was supervisor impaired? Not impaired.

At time of incident supervisor was:



Distracted
 Asleep

Absent
 Other:

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	26 Day(s)
Deceased Child's Household	Father	Alleged Perpetrator	Male	37 Year(s)
Deceased Child's Household	Mother	Alleged Perpetrator	Female	28 Year(s)

LDSS Response

On 1/30/2022, ECDSS received the SCR report and initiated their investigation into the fatal incident. ECDSS coordinated their response with LE. LE informed ECDSS the SC appeared to have died due to co-sleeping with the SM and the SF. LE informed ECDSS the SM stated she had fed the SC at approximately 12:00 AM and placed the SC on the bed between she and the SF. The SM awoke at approximately 3:45 AM and found the SC unresponsive. The SM and SF called 911 and initiated CPR until LE and EMS arrived and took over lifesaving interventions.

The SM and SF were interviewed in the home. The SM and SF confirmed the details of the fatal incident to ECDSS as reported by the police. The SM and SF identified receiving information and counseling on safe sleep practices from the pediatrician at their last visit, less than two weeks prior. The SM stated she placed the SC on the bed because he would cry if not being held and that he normally slept in the bassinet attached to their bed. The SM and SF stated the SC was bluish in color and stiff when they found him unresponsive. There were no surviving siblings or other children in the home.

ECDSS interviewed the SC's pediatrician and obtained a physical copy of the pediatrician's records. The pediatrician had no concerns for the SC in the care of the parents and confirmed providing education on safe sleep practices to the parents during their visits.

ECDSS interviewed the ME. The ME informed ECDSS the SC's death appeared to be related to co-sleeping with the parents. There were no signs of abuse or trauma, and the final autopsy report was pending at the time the investigation was closed.

ECDSS spoke with LE. LE stated there would be no criminal charges and the death appeared to have been accidental due to co-sleeping. LE did inform ECDSS of a past historical call to the home to address a domestic situation. ECDSS conducted a second interview with the parents and offered services in relation to domestic abuse; however, both declined the need for services.

The allegations of DOA/Fatality and IG regarding the SC against the SM and the SF were substantiated. The parents were provided with information on grief counseling and expressed a desire to participate, though the case record did not reflect if services were yet to be provided at the time the investigation closed.

Official Manner and Cause of Death

Official Manner: Pending



Primary Cause of Death: Pending

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 referred to an OCFS approved Child Fatality Review Team? No

Comments: The fatality was not referred to an OCFS approved Child Fatality Review Team.

SCR Fatality Report Summary

Alleged Victim(s)	Alleged Perpetrator(s)	Allegation(s)	Allegation Outcome
060531 - Deceased Child, Male, 26 Days	060532 - Father, Male, 37 Year(s)	DOA / Fatality	Substantiated
060531 - Deceased Child, Male, 26 Days	060533 - Mother, Female, 28 Year(s)	DOA / Fatality	Substantiated
060531 - Deceased Child, Male, 26 Days	060532 - Father, Male, 37 Year(s)	Inadequate Guardianship	Substantiated
060531 - Deceased Child, Male, 26 Days	060533 - Mother, Female, 28 Year(s)	Inadequate Guardianship	Substantiated

CPS Fatality Casework/Investigative Activities

	Yes	No	N/A	Unable to Determine
All children observed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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"/>

Fatality Safety Assessment Activities



	Yes	No	N/A	Unable to Determine
Were there any surviving siblings or other children in the household?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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	Not Offered	Needed but Unavailable	N/A	CDR Lead to Referral
Bereavement counseling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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"/>

Were services provided to parent(s) and other care givers to address any immediate needs related to the fatality? Unable to Determine

Explain:

The parents were provided with information on grief counseling and expressed an interest in participating in it. It was unclear from the case record if the parents had begun participating in services at the time the investigation was closed.



History Prior to the Fatality

Child Information

- Did the child have a history of alleged child abuse/maltreatment? 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? N/A
- 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 neither of the issues listed noted in case record
- With fetal alcohol effects or syndrome

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 was no CPS investigative history more than three years prior to the fatality.

Known CPS History Outside of NYS

There was no known CPS history outside of NYS.

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.

Additional Local District Comments

We at the Erie County Department of Social Services appreciate the opportunity given us to review the draft report in



advance. We find that the facts, as written, describe the unfortunate events and the actions taken in response. We are pleased that OCFS found that the fatality investigation was conducted appropriately and that there are no required actions related to the fatality.

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