



Report Identification Number: SY-18-047

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

Issue Date: Apr 23, 2019

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		



Case Information

Report Type: Child Deceased
Age: 2 month(s)

Jurisdiction: Onondaga
Gender: Male

Date of Death: 11/08/2018
Initial Date OCFS Notified: 11/09/2018

Presenting Information

An SCR report was received on 11/9/18 which alleged the 2-month-old subject child was found cold, blue, and unresponsive in his crib three hours after his mother placed him down for a nap. The mother called 911, and the child was transported to the hospital where he was pronounced deceased. The child had no preexisting medical conditions that would have contributed to his death. The roles of the father and the 1-year-old surviving sibling were unknown.

Executive Summary

This fatality report concerns the death of a 2-month-old subject child that occurred on 11/8/19. A report was made to the SCR on 11/9/18, with allegations of Inadequate Guardianship and DOA/Fatality against the child’s mother. Onondaga County Department of Social Services (OCDSS) received the report and investigated the child’s death. An autopsy was completed and both the cause and manner of death were ruled “Undetermined.”

At the time of the child’s death, he resided with his mother, father, and 1-year-old brother. It was discovered on the evening of 11/8/18, the family was at home and the mother placed the child on his stomach in his crib at approximately 6PM. There were two baby blankets in the crib with the child as he slept. Several hours later, the sibling went to bed, and the mother went to check on the subject child. She found the child face down and unresponsive in his crib. The mother yelled for the father and began cardiopulmonary resuscitation while the father called 911. An ambulance arrived at the home and transported the child to the hospital where he was pronounced deceased. An official time of death was not recorded in the medical documentation or case record; however, it was noted EMS responded to the home at 11:39PM.

From the time the investigation began to the time of its closure, OCDSS met with the mother, father, and surviving sibling. OCDSS observed the home and the sibling on several occasions and found no safety concerns. Further, OCDSS spoke with many collateral sources and offered the family appropriate referrals for services in response to the subject child’s death. There were no criminal charges pursued against either parent. Sufficient evidence was gathered to substantiate the Inadequate Guardianship allegation; however, OCDSS unsubstantiated. OCDSS unfounded the report and closed.

PIP Requirement

OCDSS will submit a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) to their Regional Office within 30 days of issuance of this report. This PIP will identify what action(s) OCDSS has taken, or will take, to address the cited issue(s). For citations where a PIP is currently implemented, OCDSS will review the plan(s) and revise as needed to further address on-going concerns.

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? No

Explain:

Sufficient evidence was gathered to substantiate the allegation of Inadequate Guardianship; however, OCDSS unsubstantiated.

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 decision to determine and close the case was appropriate.

Required Actions Related to the Fatality

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

Issue:	Appropriateness of allegation determination
Summary:	There was enough evidence gathered to substantiate for IG. The parents were educated surrounding safe sleep practices. By putting SC to sleep in a crib face down with blankets, the parents placed him in imminent danger of harm.
Legal Reference:	FCA 1012 (e) & (f); 18 NYCRR 432.2(b)(3)(iv)
Action:	OCDSS will refer to the CPS Program Manual when determining the appropriateness of allegations, and will take into consideration all information when applying the circumstances to the definition(s).

Fatality-Related Information and Investigative Activities

Incident Information

Date of Death: 11/08/2018

Time of Death: 10:33 PM

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

Unknown



County where fatality incident occurred: Onondaga
Was 911 or local emergency number called? Yes
Time of Call: 11:34 PM
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 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	2 Month(s)
Deceased Child's Household	Father	No Role	Male	23 Year(s)
Deceased Child's Household	Mother	Alleged Perpetrator	Female	30 Year(s)
Deceased Child's Household	Sibling	No Role	Male	1 Year(s)

LDSS Response

On 11/9/18, OCDSS received the SCR report regarding the death of the subject child, which occurred on 11/8/18. OCDSS initiated their investigation of the reported fatality within 24 hours and coordinated their efforts with their Multidisciplinary Team. OCDSS learned there was a surviving sibling and promptly assessed his safety; no concerns were noted.

On the date the report was received, OCDSS and Law Enforcement went to the hospital where the subject child was brought by ambulance and interviewed family members. The mother and father explained the child was acting normally throughout the day and he was put down in his crib around 6PM. The mother stated she always placed the child on his stomach to sleep, despite knowing he should be placed on his back; she reported the child was not comfortable sleeping on his back. The mother stated she laid the child sideways in the crib and then went downstairs to cook dinner. Several hours later, she went to check on the child and found he was still face down in the crib. The mother stated she picked the child up and he was pale and blue. She explained she screamed for the father, and he called 911 while the mother began CPR until EMS arrived. Although the notes did not reflect what time the mother went to check on the child, the 911 call was noted to have been placed at 11:34PM. The parents explained the sibling was asleep during this incident.

On this same date, OCDSS and Law Enforcement completed a joint home visit and noted no safety concerns. OCDSS observed the crib in which the child slept, and it was empty. OCDSS was later informed by the Medical Examiner that the child was placed to sleep on top of a "baby comforter and a baby blanket."



Throughout the investigation, OCDSS made several home visits to assess the safety of the surviving sibling and spoke with many collateral sources including Law Enforcement, the Medical Examiner, and hospital staff. The children's pediatrician was also contacted, and OCDSS was informed both children were up to date medically with no concerns. The final autopsy noted the manner of death and cause of death as "Undetermined." Appropriate service referrals were offered to the family. Although evidence was found to substantiate the allegation of Inadequate Guardianship due to the mother placing the child in an unsafe sleeping environment, OCSDS unsubstantiated all allegations and closed the case.

Official Manner and Cause of Death

Official Manner: Undetermined

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 fatality investigation was conducted by the Onondaga County Multidisciplinary Team.

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

Comments: This fatality was reviewed by the Onondaga County Child Fatality Review Team.

SCR Fatality Report Summary

Alleged Victim(s)	Alleged Perpetrator(s)	Allegation(s)	Allegation Outcome
049629 - Deceased Child, Male, 2 Mons	049631 - Mother, Female, 30 Year(s)	DOA / Fatality	Unsubstantiated
049629 - Deceased Child, Male, 2 Mons	049631 - Mother, Female, 30 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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"/>



Child Fatality Report

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:

OCDSS spoke with all appropriate collateral sources and interviewed the mother and father; the surviving sibling was not yet verbal. Progress notes were entered contemporaneously.

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 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"/>

Explain:
The Risk Assessment was completed, and did not result in any service needs. Bereavement services and counseling referrals were offered; the family accepted the counseling referral but declined the bereavement services.



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 children in the household that were removed either as a result of this fatality report / investigation or for reasons unrelated to this fatality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explain as necessary: Safety assessments were completed timely, and the surviving sibling did not need to be removed as a result of this fatality investigation or reasons unrelated.				

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 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"/>
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Additional information, if necessary:
 Appropriate services were offered in response to the fatality. The family declined any additional service needs.

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? Yes

Explain:
 OCDSS offered family counseling in response to the fatality.

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

Explain:
 OCDSS referred the parents for counseling, bereavement services, and assistance with funeral expenses.

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? 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 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

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