

Report Identification Number: AL-20-025

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

Issue Date: Feb 11, 2021

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 <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	PS-Parent Sub				
CH/CHN-Child/Children	OA-Other Adult					
	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				
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	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	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 Jurisdiction: Albany Date of Death: 08/22/2020

Age: 8 year(s) Gender: Male Initial Date OCFS Notified: 08/22/2020

Presenting Information

An SCR report was received with concerns that on 8/16/20, the child was a passenger in a vehicle being driven by his father, who was impaired by alcohol. The report alleged the father swerved the vehicle, and hit a pole, injuring both himself and the child. The child was wearing a seatbelt but was not in a required booster seat. The child sustained a tear to one of his heart valves and swelling and pressure to his leg; he went into cardiac arrest and was transported to the hospital in critical condition. The child was placed on a ventilator and declared brain dead. On an unknown time and date, the mother had the child removed from the ventilator, and the child was pronounced deceased at 2:10AM on 8/22/20.

Executive Summary

This fatality report concerns the death of an eight-year-old male subject child that occurred on 8/22/20. The child died during an ongoing Child Protective Services investigation that was received on 8/16/20, after the child sustained critical injuries as a result of a motor vehicle accident and was placed on life support. The subsequent fatality report was made to the SCR on the date of the child's death with allegations of Inadequate Guardianship, Internal Injuries, Swelling/Dislocations/Sprains, Parent's Drug/Alcohol Misuse, and DOA/Fatality against the child's father. Albany County Department for Children, Youth and Families (ACDCYF) received the report and conducted a thorough investigation into the child's death. An autopsy was completed; however, the official cause and manner of death remained pending at the time of this writing.

At the time of the child's death, he resided with his mother. The child's father saw him regularly, as he lived in the same apartment building. The child had one surviving half-sibling, 14-years-old, who resided in Westchester County with her biological father. The investigation revealed that at approximately 4:00AM on 8/16/20, the father and subject child, who had been visiting family in Queens County, left a party to return to a relative's house one hour away. The child sat in the front passenger's seat of the father's vehicle and was restrained only by a seatbelt. While on the way to the relative's home, the father lost control of the vehicle and drove into a utility pole. The airbags deployed, and the child was severely injured. The father called emergency services, and the child was brought to a nearby hospital where he was placed on a ventilator with numerous blunt force injuries. Law enforcement opened an investigation and found the father had been driving while intoxicated at the time of the crash. The child's medical condition deteriorated over the next several days, until he finally succumbed to his injuries. The child was pronounced deceased at 2:10AM on 8/22/20.

From the time the investigation began to the time of this writing, ACDCYF, with the assistance of Westchester Department of Social Services (WCDSS) and the New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS) interviewed family members and numerous collateral sources in their respective jurisdictions. The safety of the surviving sibling was assessed, and no concerns were noted. The father was arrested and charged with aggravated vehicular manslaughter and incarcerated, awaiting criminal court proceedings. ACDCYF's investigation had not yet been determined at the time this report was issued.

Findings Related to the CPS Investigation of the Fatality

AL-20-025 FINAL Page 3 of 11



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?

Unable to Determine

Explain:

ACDCYF gathered information to address all allegations in the report. The investigation had not yet been determined at the time of this writing.

Was the decision to close the case appropriate?

N/A

Was casework activity commensurate with appropriate and relevant statutory Yes

or regulatory requirements?

Was there sufficient documentation of supervisory consultation?

Yes, the case record has detail of the

consultation.

Explain:

The case record reflected supervisory consultations throughout the investigation. The level of casework activity was commensurate with the case circumstances. The investigation had not yet been determined at the time of this writing.

Required Actions Related to the Fatality

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

Fatality-Related Information and Investigative Activities

Incident Information

Date of fatal incident, if different than date of death:

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

08/16/2020
05:00 AM

County where fatality incident occurred:
Was 911 or local emergency number called?

Queens Yes

AL-20-025 FINAL Page 4 of 11



Time of Call:			Unknown
Did EMS respond to the scene?			Yes
At time of incident leading to d	eath, had child used alcol	hol or drugs?	No
Child's activity at time of incid	ent:		
☐ Sleeping	☐ Working	Driving / Ve	hicle occupant
☐ Playing	☐ Eating	Unknown	
Other			
Did child have supervision at ti	me of incident leading to	death? Yes	
At time of incident supervisor	was:		
☐ Drug Impaired		Absent	
Alcohol Impaired		Asleep	
Distracted		☐ Impaired by illness	
☐ Impaired by disability		Other:	
Total number of deaths at incid	lent 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	8 Year(s)
Deceased Child's Household	Mother	No Role	Female	34 Year(s)
Other Household 1	Father	Alleged Perpetrator	Male	34 Year(s)
Other Household 2	Sibling	No Role	Female	14 Year(s)

LDSS Response

On 8/22/20, ACDCYF received the fatality report regarding the death of SC. ACDCYF initiated their investigation within 24 hours and coordinated their efforts with their multidisciplinary team. This fatality report was subsequent to an open investigation which began on 8/16/20, after SC sustained life-threatening injuries as a result of a motor vehicle accident. Upon receipt of the initial report, ACDCYF began gathering information surrounding the incident. The accident occurred in Queens County; however, the family resided in Albany County. ACDCYF assigned the New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS) a secondary role and requested interviews with the family in their county be completed promptly.

On 8/16/20, ACS met with medical staff where SC had been admitted. The staff explained the SC had been restrained in the passenger seat of the vehicle when the vehicle struck a telephone pole and the airbags deployed. The staff reported SC became unresponsive due to the impact and blood filled his chest cavity; SC suffered an atrial tear and sternal fracture, as well as an injury to his leg and underwent surgeries. On this same date, ACS met with SF at the hospital. SF reported he resided in Albany with SC and BM, and on 8/14/20, SF, SC, and MGM rode together to Queens County to stay at SF's aunt's home. SF stated they spent the night at the aunt's home as they were to attend a family function the following day. SF explained on 8/15/20, they arrived at the family function around 3:00PM, and he and SC stayed until 7:00PM; from there, they went to an after party at SF's brother's home. SF reported he and SC stayed at that party until 4:00AM on 8/16/20, and on the way back to the aunt's home, a vehicle cut him off and caused SF to hit a utility pole. SF admitted he

AL-20-025 FINAL Page 5 of 11



had several alcoholic beverages over the course of the previous day, but denied he was intoxicated while driving. During this interview, BM arrived at the hospital and spoke with ACS. BM explained SF and SC left on 8/14/20 and were staying the weekend with relatives. She reported she received a voicemail from SF at 4:00AM on 8/16/20 where he sounded intoxicated and had slurred speech; SM played the voicemail for ACS. BM stated the next call she received was around 7:00AM and she was informed by SF that he and SC had gotten into an accident. SM said SF had told her SC was "okay," and when she asked SF if he had been drinking, he hung up on her. She stated she took a bus to get to the hospital as soon as she was able. BM denied knowledge of SF having a problem with alcohol; however, recalled smelling alcohol on his breath in the past.

From 8/16/20 to 8/22/20, SC's health deteriorated. On 8/21/20, SC's spinal cord herniated overnight, and he began experiencing seizures. SC underwent testing and was declared brain dead. On 8/22/20, life saving measures were ceased and SC was pronounced dead at 2:10AM.

On 8/22/20, ACDCYF conducted a video call to speak with SS and her BF. SS reported she did not have any recent contact with SF, and she felt safe with both BM and BF.

ACDCYF was informed by the DA that SF was arrested and charged with aggravated vehicular manslaughter and incarcerated in Queens County. The DA also noted LE had breathalyzed SF at the hospital following the accident, and his alcohol content was .118.

Throughout the investigation, numerous attempts were made between ACDCYF and WCDSS to assess the home environments of the SS' BF's residence; however, he was uncooperative. ACDCYF spoke with collateral sources and offered the family services in response to the fatality. The investigation remained open and ongoing at the time of this writing.

Official Manner and Cause of Death

Official Manner: Accident

Primary Cause of Death: From an injury - external 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 Albany County MDT.

Was the fatality reviewed by an OCFS approved Child Fatality Review Team? Yes Comments: This fatality was reviewed the Albany County Child Fatality Review Team.

SCR Fatality Report Summary

Alleged Victim(s)	Alleged Perpetrator(s)	Allegation(s)	Allegation Outcome
055987 - Deceased Child, Male, 8 Yrs	055989 - Father, Male, 34 Year(s)	DOA / Fatality	Pending
055987 - Deceased Child, Male, 8 Yrs	055989 - Father, Male, 34 Year(s)	Inadequate Guardianship	Pending
055987 - Deceased Child, Male, 8 Yrs	055989 - Father, Male, 34 Year(s)	Internal Injuries	Pending

AL-20-025 FINAL Page 6 of 11

NEW YORK STATE	Office of Children and Family Services
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055987 - Deceased Child, Male, 8	055989 - Father, Male, 34	Parents Drug / Alcohol Misuse	Pending
Yrs	Year(s)		
055987 - Deceased Child, Male, 8	055989 - Father, Male, 34	Swelling / Dislocations /	Pending
Yrs	Year(s)	Sprains	_

CPS Fatality Casework/Investigative Activities

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

Additional information:

ACDCYF interviewed the family and relevant collateral sources. Progress notes and other documentation were completed and entered within the required timeframes.

Fatality Safety Assessment Activities

	Yes	No	N/A	Unable to Determine
Were there any surviving siblings or other children in the household?	\boxtimes			
Was there an adequate assessment of impending or immediate danger to shousehold named in the report:	surviving	siblings/o	ther child	dren in the
Within 24 hours?	\boxtimes			
At 7 days?	\boxtimes			
At 30 days?	\boxtimes			
Was there an approved Initial Safety Assessment for all surviving siblings/ other children in the household within 24 hours?	\boxtimes			
Are there any safety issues that need to be referred back to the local district?		\boxtimes		

AL-20-025 FINAL Page 7 of 11



children in the ho	ors were present that placed the ousehold in impending or immending or immending parties, including p	diate danger of serious				
	Fatality Risk A	Assessment / Risk Assessment	Profile			
			Yes	No	N/A	Unable to Determine
Was the risk asse	ssment/RAP adequate in this c	ase?				
_	e of the investigation, was suffices risk to all surviving siblings/o					
Was there an ade	equate assessment of the family	's need for services?	\boxtimes			
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?				\boxtimes		
Were appropriat	e/needed services offered in thi	s case	\boxtimes			
Explain: Services were offe	ered to the family in response to S	SC's death.				
	Placement Activities	s in Response to the Fatality In	vestigatio	n		
			- ,			
			Yes	No	N/A	Unable to Determine
siblings/other chi	tors in the case show the need is ldren in the household be remoduring this fatality investigation	ved or placed in foster				
	ving children in the household fatality report / investigation o			\boxtimes		
Explain as necess There were no oth	er children residing in the SC's h	ousehold.				
	Legal A	ctivity Related to the Fatality				
	Legari	etivity Related to the Fatanty				
Was there legal a c ☐Family Court	ctivity as a result of the fatality		□Ord	er of Pro	tection	
Criminal Charge	: Other - Aggravated Vehicular I	Manslaughter Degree: N	A			
Date Charges Filed:	Against Whom?	Date of Disposition:			Disposition	ı:
Pending	SF	Pending		I	Inknown	



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SF was charged with aggravated vehicular manslaughter after driving intoxicated with SC as a passenger, causing his death.

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							
Economic support							
Funeral arrangements							
Housing assistance							
Mental health services							
Foster care							
Health care							
Legal services							
Family planning							
Homemaking Services							
Parenting Skills							
Domestic Violence Services							
Early Intervention							
Alcohol/Substance abuse		\boxtimes					
Child Care							
Intensive case management							
Family or others as safety resources							
Other						\boxtimes	
Additional information if necessary	•		•				•

Additional information, if necessary:

The family was provided information regarding grief and bereavement resources. SF initially denied having a problem with alcohol and the need for services, and was incarcerated shortly thereafter. ACDCYF assisted BM with applications for housing assistance.

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:

Grief and bereavement referrals were offered to the parents of the SS.

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

Explain:

Services were offered to the family in response to the fatality.

AL-20-025 FINAL Page 9 of 11



History Prior to the Fatality

Child Information	
Did the child have a history of alleged child abuse/maltreatment?	Yes
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

CPS - Investigative History Three Years Prior to the Fatality

Date of SCR Report	Alleged Victim(s)	Alleged Perpetrator(s)	Allegation(s)	Allegation Outcome	Compliance Issue(s)
12/09/2017	Adult Sibling, Female, 17 Years	Mother, Female, 31 Years	Inadequate Guardianship	Unsubstantiated	No
	Adult Sibling, Female, 17 Years	Mother, Female, 31 Years	Parents Drug / Alcohol Misuse	Unsubstantiated	
	Adult Sibling, Female, 17 Years	Grandparent, Female, 51 Years	Inadequate Guardianship	Unsubstantiated	

Report Summary:

New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS) received this SCR report with concerns BM's now adult child ran away from home, and the child's grandmother with whom she lived did not contact LE or make efforts to locate her. The report alleged the child suffered a medical issue while away and was hospitalized. There were further concerns BM was frequently intoxicated and unable to care for her child.

Report Determination: Unfounded **Date of Determination:** 02/02/2018

Basis for Determination:

ACS completed interviews with family and collateral sources. The child resided with the grandmother in the city and would occasionally run away to Albany to meet her boyfriend. BM expressed interest in filing PINS due to the child's behaviors. The grandmother and BM tried to report the child missing to LE; however, due to her age (17yo), they did not consider her a runaway. BM denied having a problem with alcohol, and ACS found no evidence of such during their investigation. ACS also found the grandmother followed the doctor's recommendations regarding child's medical needs. The case was unfounded and closed.

OCFS Review Results:

This investigation met all statutory requirements.

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

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

In 2016, BM was listed as a subject in one unfounded CPS investigation with allegations of IG and PD/AM regarding SC and a now adult sibling.

Known CPS History Outside of NYS

There was no known CPS history outside of NYS.

AL-20-025 FINAL Page 10 of 11



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				