

## Child Fatality Summary

**Child's Name:** Mariela Torres-Velazquez

**County:** Highlands

**Date of Birth:** 04/17/2021

**Date of Death:** 07/20/2022

**Report Number:** 2022-176411

### Family Composition Chart

Name	Age at Time of the Incident	Relationship with Deceased Child
Mariela Torres-Velazquez	1 year old	Child Victim
[REDACTED]	3 years old	Sibling
Gabriela Torres-Saez	24 years old	Mother
Isaac Torres-Saez	24 years old	Father

### Circumstances Surrounding Death

On July 21, 2022, a report was received indicating the 1-year-old child passed away on July 20, 2022, after suffering a drowning incident on June 8, 2022.

According to the father and law enforcement, the following information was provided.

Per Law Enforcement's Arrest Affidavit: On June 7, 2022, the father began playing video games at 4:00 p.m. and did not stop playing until 4:00 a.m. on June 8, 2022.

On June 8, 2022, the mother left for work at a bank and the father was at home with the children. At an unknown time later that morning the father woke up when the child became restless. The father changed her diaper and decided to give her a bath because she was sticky. The father put the child in the bathtub with the water running and the drain plug was not in place. The father left the bathroom, went back to the master bedroom, sat down on the bed, picked up his phone, and lost track of time. He indicated he waited for "a little bit" for the child to make noise because that it was how they had given her a bath before. She would normally grab a hold of the side of the tub and make screaming noises and start throwing toys. The father indicated to law enforcement that it was normal for him to walk away from the bathtub. Law enforcement quoted the father stating, "I was on my phone for God knows how fucking long." The father advised law enforcement that he was scrolling through TikTok on his phone. The father was unable to provide a timeframe for how long he was on his phone. The father indicated he got a "feeling" when he realized he had not heard the child making noise. The father went to the bathroom and found the child face down in the bathtub. The father indicated to law enforcement that the tub had filled up to about two finger lengths below the top of the tub. The father pulled the child from the bathtub, and she

was limp and unresponsive. The father took her to the gaming room, placed her on the air mattress and began CPR.

The mother was on a break at work and tried to call the father at 11:34 a.m.; he did not answer, and she thought that was odd. She called back, the father answered, stated, "She's not breathing", and began screaming. The mother left work, stayed on the phone with the father the whole time and arrived home at approximately 11:45 a.m. The mother called 911 at 11:45 a.m. Law Enforcement and Emergency Medical Services responded to the home and the child was transported to Advent Health Sebring and then to Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital in Tampa.

On June 8, 2022, the mother consented to a drug screen and was negative. The father consented to a drug screen but was unable to produce any urine.

Per hospital staff, the child initially coded for 34 minutes and had elevated enzymes, which indicated the child was under water for a long time. The heart was stopped long enough to cause critical brain damage and the child's neurological system was not responding when touched. The child's temperature was 91 degrees when she arrived at the hospital. The child was intubated and on a ventilator. The child was showing no neurological function and the parents agreed to withdraw care. On July 20, 2022, the child was transferred to Good Shephard's Hospice in Sebring.

On July 20, 2022, Mariela Torres-Velazquez was pronounced deceased at 5:05 p.m.

The Highlands County Sheriff's Office investigated the death of Mariela Torres-Velazquez (22-060173). On June 30, 2022, the father was arrested and charged with Neglect of a Child with Great Bodily Harm. The father was sentenced to 5 years' Probation with a start date of October 17, 2022, with a scheduled termination date of October 16, 2027. The Court Order dated September 20, 2022, has the following stipulations, "No caregiving for any child 5 years of age and younger" and "No objection to withhold of adjudication."

The death certificate was received on January 11, 2023, and indicated District 10 Medical Examiner Stephen J. Nelson, M.D., signed and certified the death certificate for Mariela Torres-Velazquez on January 5, 2023. ME# 23-10-FA-485.

Cause of Death: Sequelae of Freshwater Near Drowning

Manner of Death: Accident

On January 22, 2023, the Department of Children and Families' investigation was closed with:

- Verified Findings of Death and Inadequate Supervision as to Mariela Torres-Velazquez, with Isaac Torres-Saez as the caregiver responsible.

- Verified Findings of Threatened Harm as to [REDACTED], with Isaac Torres-Saez as the caregiver responsible.

**Other Children in the Family:**

[REDACTED]

**Summary of Current Agency Involvement with Family**

The family did not have any open services.

**Summary of Prior Agency Involvement with Family**

The family does not have any prior abuse report history.



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Central Region Child Fatality Prevention Specialist  
Kirby Morgan

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1/24/23

Date



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Central Region Director of Child Protection  
Stephanie Weis

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01/24/2023

Date