

Child Fatality Summary

Child's Name: Jaylah Bass

County: Hillsborough

Date of Birth: 11/26/2016

Date of Death: 8/29/2022

Report Number: 2022-261456

Family Composition Chart

Name	Age at Time of the Incident	Relationship with Deceased Child
Jaylah Bass	5 years	Deceased Child
██████████	8 years	Surviving Sibling
Shirley Romero	28 years	Mother
Jermaine Bass	30 years	Father

Circumstances Surrounding Death

On August 30, 2022, an investigation was received regarding the death of 5-year-old Jaylah Bass after she and her older sibling sustained gunshot wounds to their heads. At the time of the incident, the household consisted of the children and their parents.

The mother went out to dinner with family to celebrate a relative's birthday on the evening of August 29, 2022. When she returned home, she went into the children's room and kissed them goodnight, then she went into the bathroom. She then headed outside to ensure she locked her vehicle and while walking down the stairs of the home, she heard multiple gunshots. She continued down the stairs and met with a neighbor, who called 911.

Law enforcement and paramedics responded to the family's home shortly after receiving the 911 call. The father was observed holding the oldest child, who was covered in blood, and the father advised that his firearm accidentally discharged while he was removing the magazine. Law enforcement observed blood on the walls and floor near the upstairs bedroom and discovered Jaylah lying in a pool of blood on the top bunk of the children's bed. Both children suffered gunshot wounds and were transported to Tampa General Hospital for immediate medical attention. The younger child was unable to recover due to the severity of her injuries and she was pronounced deceased a short time after arrival at the hospital.

Dr. P. McGowan with the Hillsborough County Medical Examiner's Office conducted the autopsy on the child. The cause of death is listed as gunshot wounds of the head into the neck with perforation of the skull, brain, and spinal cord and the manner of death was deemed a homicide.

The Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office conducted the criminal investigation. On August 30, 2022, the father was arrested on charges of first-degree murder, attempted murder, and aggravated child abuse. He remains incarcerated at the time of this report writing.

Based on the interviews and evidence gathered during the course of the investigation, the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Child Protective Investigations Division closed their investigation with the following findings:

Child	Identified Maltreatment	Finding	Caregiver Responsible
Jaylah Bass	Death	Verified	Father
	Physical Injury	Verified	Father
	Internal Injuries	Verified	Father
	Inadequate Supervision	No Indicators	N/A
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

Other Children in the Family

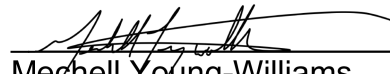
After the shooting incident the older sibling necessitated several surgeries and an extended hospital stay. He was later released to his mother's care. The Child Protection Team completed a medical records review regarding the sibling and opined positive findings of child abuse.

Concerns for the mother's protective capacities arose during the investigation as it was learned that she was allowing the sibling to have phone contact with the father, despite the circumstances surrounding the incident and an active criminal no contact order. He was ultimately removed from the parents and placed into licensed foster care; his placement was later modified to the home of maternal relatives. The child engaged in counseling services at his local school and the family will be provided any necessary services via the open judicial case.

Summary of Prior Agency Involvement with Family

There are two prior investigations concerning the family. [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]

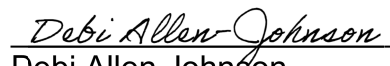
The next investigation occurred in 2018, alleging that the children had lead exposure and medical follow-up was warranted but refused. It was learned during the investigation that the exposure was related to the father's construction job, and it was confirmed by the pediatrician that the children were attending pediatric appointments and receiving preventative care. The investigation resulted in no findings of any maltreatments.



Mechell Young-Williams
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SunCoast Region

9/19/2023

Date



Debi Allen Johnson
Regional Program Manager
SunCoast Region

09/19/2023

Date