

Child Fatality Summary

Child's Name: Alayla Hardin

County: Manatee

Date of Birth: 4/7/2021

Date of Death: 11/1/2022

Report Number: 2022-335436

Family Composition Chart

Name	Age at Time of the Incident	Relationship with Deceased Child
Alayla Hardin	1 ½ years	Deceased Child
Vickie Hardin	66 years	Paternal Great-Grandmother
Jimmy Hardin	72 years	Paternal Great-Grandfather
Eric Hardin	42 years	Paternal Uncle

Circumstances Surrounding Death

On November 1, 2022, an investigation was received regarding the death of 1 ½ -year-old Alayla Hardin who drowned while she was visiting the home of her paternal great-grandparents (referred to as the grandparents going forward).

The toddler spent the night at the grandparents' home on October 31st, and the next morning, the grandmother took her to a fast-food restaurant to pick up breakfast. They returned to the home with the food around 8:30 a.m. and they all ate breakfast in the grandparents' bedroom. After eating they all laid down in the grandparents' bed and the grandparents fell asleep sometime later. When the grandmother awoke, she noticed it was quiet in the home and began looking for the toddler. During the search, she realized that their sliding glass door was open and immediately went to the patio area, where the uncle was sleeping in a rocking chair. She then discovered the toddler unresponsive in the jacuzzi and woke the uncle, who retrieved the child from the water. The adults then called 911 and attempted cardiopulmonary resuscitation until paramedics arrived. First responders arrived on scene a short time later; however, the child could not be revived, and she was pronounced deceased at 10:51 a.m.

Records reflect that the patio can be accessed from a sliding glass door in the family's living room, and at the time of the incident, there were no alarms or child locks on the door. The patio contained an inground pool with an attached jacuzzi, and the area was described as cluttered and unsanitary. A mesh safety net surrounded the pool, but it was not secured, and it was in poor condition, leaving the water accessible. Additional safety concerns were identified within the home, as multiple prescription bottles, knives, and firearms were found within the toddler's reach.

Presumptive drug screens were offered to all the adults. Although the uncle was unable to provide a sample for the drug screen, he was visibly impaired at the onset of the investigation. The grandfather is described as bedridden, but he can walk short distances throughout the home. Both of the grandparents have health conditions for which various medications are prescribed, and there were concerns regarding misuse, as there were bottles with labels rubbed off, pills unaccounted for, and medication bottles that contained various pills. The grandparents agreed to drug screen and they both tested positive for their prescription medications. The grandmother also tested positive for morphine, offering that she took one of her husband’s pills days prior. Additionally, the grandmother admitted that they frequently used each other’s medications.

Dr. S. Utley with the District 12 (Manatee, Sarasota, and Desoto Counties) Medical Examiner’s Office conducted the autopsy on the toddler. The cause of death is listed as drowning and the manner as an accident.

The Manatee County Sheriff’s Office conducted the criminal investigation, and a capias request was sent to the State Attorney’s Office regarding the grandmother. However, the criminal investigation was resolved with no charges or an arrest.

Based on the interviews and evidence gathered during the course of this investigation, Child Protective Investigations in Manatee County closed their investigation with the following findings:

Child	Identified Maltreatment	Finding	Caregiver Responsible
Alayla Hardin	Death	Verified	Grandmother/Grandfather
	Environmental Hazards	Verified	Grandmother/Grandfather
	Inadequate Supervision	Verified	Grandmother/Grandfather
	Substance Misuse – Illicit	Verified	Uncle
	Substance Misuse – Prescription	Verified	Grandmother/Uncle

Other Children in the Family

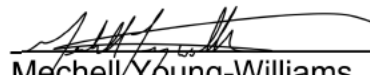
The grandparents have no other children in their care.

Summary of Prior Agency Involvement with Family

There are no prior investigations involving the paternal grandparents.

There is one investigation from April 2021 concerning substance use, as the mother and child tested positive for illicit substances when the child was born. The mother tested positive for marijuana and methadone, and she advised that she smoked marijuana throughout her pregnancy to treat nausea and claimed that she took methadone (not prescribed to her) several times towards the end of her pregnancy to manage headaches. The child tested positive only for marijuana; however, she experienced

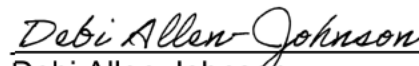
withdrawal symptoms and necessitated additional treatment and an extended hospital stay after her birth. Additionally, the father was a regular marijuana smoker. The family engaged with various services, to include crisis intervention services, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], Healthy Families, and family support services, and the investigation was closed with verified findings of the substance exposed newborn maltreatment.



Mechell Young-Williams
Child Fatality Prevention Specialist
SunCoast Region

6/2/2023

Date



Debi Allen-Johnson
Interim Regional Program Manager
SunCoast Region

06/02/2023

Date