

Child Fatality Summary

Child's Name: Reesi Sue Benson

County: Polk

Date of Birth: 04/25/2023

Date of Death: 05/03/2023

Report Number: 2023-136911

Family Composition Chart

Name	Age at Time of the Incident	Relationship with Deceased Child
Reesi Sue Benson	8 days old	Child Victim
Christin Matheny	40 years old	Mother
David Benson	41 years old	Prospective Father

Circumstances Surrounding Death

On May 4, 2023, a report was received indicating the 8-day-old infant passed away on May 3, 2023.

According to the family, the following information was provided.

The mother was pregnant. On April 23, 2023, the mother was seen at Winter Haven Hospital for high blood pressure and checked herself out Against Medical Advice (AMA). The mother was diagnosed with preeclampsia. On April 25, 2023, the mother began having seizures, called 911, and was transported to Winter Haven Hospital. While in the hospital, the mother gave birth to a baby girl via emergency C-section at approximately 34 weeks gestation. The mother and baby both tested positive for Amphetamines and the baby was also positive for Opiates. The mother had no known prescriptions.

The baby was born limp, suffering from respiratory distress, possible hypoxic ischemic encephalopathy (a swelling of the brain caused by lack of oxygen or limited blood flow). The infant's heart rate then spiked, she was intubated and transferred to St. Joseph's Children's Hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). The baby was on a ventilator and not breathing on her own while the mother remained incoherent and hospitalized. The mother had no known history of seizures. The infant experienced medical complications resulting from a combination of the prenatal drug exposure and the mother's untreated medical conditions after she left the hospital AMA.

On April 27, 2023, the mother was taken off sedation and when she came to, she answered questions with Yes and No head shakes. The mother indicated Yes to her using methamphetamine(s) (meth) while she was pregnant, the father did not know that

she was using Meth, and that she had been using Meth for the last four years. The mother denied using any other substances.

On May 3, 2023, Reesi Sue Benson was pronounced deceased at 7:59 p.m.

The prospective father declined to drug screen. He indicated the mother went off of her medications for anxiety, depression, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder a year ago. The father was removed from the hospital at one point due to his behaviors.

The death certificate was received on May 22, 2023, and indicated Dr. Aaron J. Clark, M.D., signed and certified the death certificate for Reesi Sue Benson on May 8, 2023. ME# 2023-080342.

Cause of Death: Respiratory Failure 5 Days Hypoxic Ischemic Encephalopathy 5 Days Maternal Eclampsia / Seizures 5 Days

Manner of Death: Natural

On June 23, 2023, the Department of Children and Families' investigation was closed with:

- Verified Findings of Death and Substance Exposed Newborn as to Reesi Sue Benson, with Christin Matheny as the caregiver responsible.
- Not Substantiated Findings of Threatened Harm as to Reesi Sue Benson.

Other Children in the Family:

Grief counseling information was provided to the family.

Summary of Current Agency Involvement with Family

The family did not have any open services.

Summary of Prior Agency Involvement with Family

[REDACTED]



Central Region Child Fatality Prevention Specialist
Kirby Morgan

7/7/23

Date



Central Region Director of Child Protection
Stephanie Weis

7/7/23

Date