

Child Fatality Summary

Child's Name: Efreem Allen, III

County: Polk

Date of Birth: 09/09/2019

Date of Death: 05/12/2023

Report Number: 2023-157826

Family Composition Chart

Name	Age at Time of the Incident	Relationship with Deceased Child
Efreem Allen, III	3 years old	Child Victim
██████████	11 months old	Sibling
██████████	2 years old	Sibling
Takesha Williams	24 years old	Mother
Efreem Allen, Jr.	33 years old	Father

Circumstances Surrounding Death

On May 12, 2023, the 3-year-old child passed away after what was alleged to be severe neglect.

According to the family, the following information was provided.

The decedent suffered a non-fatal drowning in July 2020 when he was 10 months old. As a result, the child was medically complex and in a persistent vegetative state. The parents brought him home from the hospital and the Department assisted the family with the following resources: Neighbors to Families was referred; In-Home Nursing; a double stroller so the child and his medical equipment could be transported to doctor's appointments; and a crib was purchased for the family. The parents were both trained by hospital staff to meet the child's medical needs, including CPR certification.

On May 12, 2023, at 3:03 p.m. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) was called to the home due to an unresponsive child. When EMS personnel arrived at the home, they encountered a foul, putrid smell pervading the residence, consistent with that of a dead body. The air conditioning was broken, and the residence was warm. There were a lot of flies in the home. No one was performing CPR on the child. The child did not have a pulse and was transported to Bartow Regional Medical Center.

On May 12, 2023, Efreem Allen, III was pronounced deceased at 3:52 p.m.

The case was referred to the Child Protection Team (CPT) and a Multi-Disciplinary Team staffing was held on May 24th, 2023. CPT completed a medical exam on the

siblings, along with follow up weight checks, and they had verified findings of Failure to Thrive for both children.

The Polk County Sheriff's Office investigated the death of Efrem Allen, III (2023-20287). On May 12, 2023, Efrem Allen, Jr. and Takesha Williams were arrested and charged with Negligent Child Abuse Causing Great Harm and on May 26, 2023, their charges were upgraded to Aggravated Manslaughter of a Child.

According to the detective, there were no toys in the house. The bed for the child had no sheets, pillows, or blankets visible. There was a lot of clothing, trash, and other clutter on the floors of the residence. The child was observed to have multiple open sores on his body. There were open sores on his right hip, left ear, left shoulder, two large open sores on his back, the back of his head and top of his foot and his anus/buttocks. They were all in varying stages of decomposition to include extensive destruction, tissue necrosis and damage down to the bone. The decomposition was so severe on his buttocks that his colon was exposed. There were three cavernous sores on his bottom area where tissue was decomposed and absent. His eyes were fixed open and cloudy/opaque. The parents had sunglasses on him and the mother reported that his eyes were like that because he did not blink, and she always puts sunglasses on him. The child's stomach was severely distended, and there were yellow secretions from his G-tube site from the bloating after death. The mother said that she knew the sores were bad enough that she should have called someone, but she did not because she knew DCF would get involved and remove the other children.

The parents were interviewed by the PCSO Detective. The mother first stated that the bed sores were new and that she stuffed the sores with gauze. She stated that the child had been to Nemours within the last six months and that a new home health nurse was supposed to be starting the week of May 15th. The parents discontinued previous home health nursing services in October 2022. The service tried to follow-up with the mother multiple times by phone and in-person, but the mother failed to answer calls or answer the door when they arrived. She insisted that she did nothing wrong. The father stated that he comes to the mother's residence every day, that the mother was an excellent caregiver, and that on the morning of May 12, the child was a little cold, so they put blankets on him. The parents reported that because the child was on a ventilator, they would have no way of knowing if the child was "gone". He knew the bed sores were there and said that they had been there before. He knew they were bad but did not admit to any deficient care of the child, stating that they followed doctor's orders regarding the sores.

Both parents were combative and argumentative with law enforcement and the department's investigator. They did not understand why law enforcement was called to their residence. They refused to complete drug screens.

The death certificate was received on September 25, 2023, and indicated District 10 Medical Examiner Daniel F. Garavan, M.D., signed and certified the death certificate for Efrem Allen, III on September 19, 2023. ME# 23-10-FA-341.

Cause of Death: Sepsis Bilateral Pneumonia Infected Decubital Ulcers and Fecal Impaction

Other Significant Conditions: Child Neglect

Manner of Death: Homicide

On October 10, 2023, the Department of Children and Families' investigation was closed with:

- Verified Findings of Death, Medical Neglect, Failure to Thrive/ Malnutrition/ Dehydration, Internal Injuries, and Inadequate Supervision as to Efrem Allen, III, with Takesha Williams and Efrem Allen, Jr. as the caregivers responsible.
- Verified Findings of Environmental Hazards, Failure to Protect, Threatened Harm as to Efrem Allen, III [REDACTED], and [REDACTED] with Takesha Williams and Efrem Allen, Jr. as the caregivers responsible.

Other Children in the Family:

On May 15, 2023, the siblings were sheltered [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 has four prior abuse reports from 2003 to 2020, showing a pattern of inadequate supervision and marijuana use. The 2020 non-fatal drowning of the decedent was received with concerns for inadequate supervision, and it was closed with verified findings. The grandmother rented a vacation home and invited the family to visit. The family turned the alarm to the sliding glass door off due to the family being in and out of the home all day, despite the multiple visual warnings posted around the pool area. The grandmother went upstairs to bed and the parents asked other family to watch the baby while they showered. There was not an individual person that was in charge, and it was a general statement made. The child went out of the sliding glass door and the pool area did not have an extra barrier to block the child from getting into the pool. The family members downstairs noticed the child was missing and an aunt found the child in the pool. The aunt pulled the child from the pool and did CPR. The family thought Emergency Medical Services were taking too long, and they left with the child to go to the hospital. The child was stabilized at the Celebration Hospital and then was transferred to Advent Health Orlando. Both parents tested positive for marijuana.

After the incident the child was released home in a vegetative state and was diagnosed with acute respiratory failure, he was comatose, had flaccid paralysis, Hypoxic-Ischemic Encephalopathy, and was G-tube dependent. While at the hospital, the parents were provided with options regarding his quality of life and his medical care. The palliative care team through St. Joseph's worked with the family and they opted to bring the child home. His condition was permanent, and he would remain dependent on the ventilator and the G-tube for the remainder of his life. The child also required approximately 17 medications and had multiple specialists for his medical care (Pediatrician, Pediatric Otolaryngology, Pediatric Pulmonologist, and Pediatric Gastrologist). He was discharged home from St. Josephs with mechanical ventilation equipment, nebulizer treatments, oxygen therapy, tube feeding equipment, medications as well as 24 hours (the best it can be staffed) in home nursing.



Central Region Child Fatality Prevention Specialist
Kirby Morgan

10/17/23
Date



Central Region Director of Child Protection
Stephanie Weis

10/17/23
Date