

Child Fatality Summary

Child's Name: Willow Kubai

County: Polk

Date of Birth: 10/05/2023

Date of Death: 02/25/2024

Report Number: 2024-068206

Family Composition Chart

Name	Age at Time of the Incident	Relationship with Deceased Child
Willow Kubai	4 months old	Child Victim
Rebekah Knorr	22 years old	Mother
Jacob Kubai	22 years old	Father

Circumstances Surrounding Death

On February 25, 2024, the 4-month-old infant passed away after suffering apparent abusive head trauma on February 22, 2024.

According to the family, the following information was provided.

On February 22, 2024, the mother stated that she left for work at approximately 4:00 p.m. and the infant was left in the father's care. The father indicated that after dropping the mother off at work, he was playing a video game and checking on the infant every so often. After an hour of checking on the infant and playing video games, he took the child and went to Walmart for chicken broth and cheese puffs, and then fed the infant again. He stated that he had placed the infant on the floor to burp while he continued cooking and listening to music. At approximately 8:00 p.m., he saw the child struggling to breathe. He picked the infant up; she was limp, and her chest was not moving. The father indicated he attempted CPR before he noticed the formula coming out of the child's nose and mouth. The father indicated he did not call 911, but instead drove the child to Bartow Regional Medical Center as he thought it would be faster than waiting for the ambulance.

The Emergency Room at Bartow Regional Medical Center documented abnormal findings: the infant was unresponsive, cyanotic, soft/bulging fontanelle, pupils dilated nonreactive to light, pulseless, asystole, and CPR was performed. Shortly after chest compressions began, the infant vomited. The infant was treated with multiple doses of epinephrine and pushes of intravenous fluids and then was intubated. The infant was air-lifted to St. Joseph's Hospital in Tampa and at arrival the infant's pupils were non-reactive and she had no brain activity. Further assessment revealed the infant had multiple injuries to include scratches on the back of her head, bruises on her forehead, scratches around her right eye, three scratches on her nose, a brain bleed, fractures on

the front and back of her ribs, and a skull fracture across her forehead from temple to temple. Initial brain death testing occurred showing no brain activity, a second test confirmed brain-death, and on February 25, 2024, the infant was pronounced deceased at 5:06 p.m.

The Bartow Police Department (24-519) completed the initial response and then transferred the case to the Polk County Sheriff's Office Homicide Unit (2024-006878) to complete the investigation into the death of the infant. On March 5, 2024, the father was arrested and charged with Aggravated Manslaughter of a Child, Aggravated Child Abuse, and two counts of Knowingly Abuse Child without Bodily Harm

The death certificate was received on April 1, 2024, and indicated District 10 Medical Examiner Vera V. Volnikh, M.D., signed and certified the death certificate for the child on March 27, 2024. ME# 24-10-FA-108.

Cause of Death: Head Trauma

Manner of Death: Homicide

On December 4, 2024, the Department of Children and Families' investigation was closed with:

- Verified Findings of Death, Physical Injury, Internal Injuries, and Bone Fracture as to the infant, with the father as the caregiver responsible.

Other Children in the Family:

Grief counseling was offered to the family and declined.

Summary of Current Agency Involvement with Family

The family did not have any open services.

Summary of Prior Agency Involvement with Family

The infant and father do not have any prior abuse report history. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



Central Region Child Fatality Prevention Specialist
Kirby Morgan



Date

Central Region Director of Child Protection
Stephanie Weis

Date