

Critical Incident Review Team Final Report



A Critical Incident Review Team is convened by the Department Director when the Department becomes aware of a critical incident resulting in a child fatality that was reasonably believed to be the result of abuse and the child, child's sibling or another child living in the household with the child has had contact with the Department (ODHS). The reviews are called by the Department Director to quickly analyze ODHS actions in relation to the critical incident and to ensure the safety and well-being of all children within the custody of ODHS or during a child protective services assessment. The CIRT must complete a final report which serves to provide an overview of the critical incident, relevant Department history, and may include recommendations regarding actions that should be implemented to increase child safety. Reports must not contain any confidential information or records that may not be disclosed to members of the public. *The CIRT report is created at a specific time as required by statute and does not account for events occurring after the posting of the report.* Versions of all final reports are posted on the ODHS website.

CIRT ID: CU101BRPD6		
Date of critical incident: October 3, 2023	Date Department became aware of the fatality: October 3, 2023	
Date Department caused an investigation to be made: October 3, 2023	Date of child protective services (CPS) assessment disposition: January 17, 2024	
Date CIRT assigned: October 10, 2023	Date Final Report Due: January 18, 2024	
Date of CIRT meetings: November 3, 2023 December 6, 2023	Number of participants: 19 21	Members of the public? 0 0

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Description of the critical incident and Department contacts regarding the critical incident:

Date of report:	Allegation(s):	Disposition(s):
October 3, 2023	Neglect by the Mother	Unable to Determine
Assignment decision: Within 24 Hours	Threat of Harm by the Mother	Founded

On October 2, 2023, Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) received a report alleging neglect to the 4-year-old child and threat of harm to the child's siblings by their mother. It was reported the child was fatally struck by a vehicle in front of the family home and pronounced deceased on scene. The mother was reported to have been pushing the children down a slope in the driveway and did not see a car was coming when she pushed the child into the street on a bike or a skateboard. It was reported the child's siblings had witnessed the incident. Law enforcement reported there were no concerns with the driver involved in the accident.

The mother was interviewed shortly after the incident by law enforcement and the mental health response team. She reported she was pushing the children down a slope in the driveway into the street on bikes and skateboards. The mother stated she did not see a car coming due to a truck that was parked on the street, blocking her view from the driveway. She said she had screamed "no" as she saw a car coming towards the child, but she was unable to stop the child in time. Concerns for the mother's mental health were noted during contact with law enforcement and the mental crisis team. The mother reported she took vitamins for her mental health and stated she would let the children stay up late so they will "stay away from the alternate reality." Allegations of threat of harm to the child's three siblings and neglect to the child by their mother was assigned for CPS assessment with a 24-hours response time. A companion case to the mother's roommate's ex-spouse was closed at screening regarding allegations for threat of harm to the roommate's child who frequented the home but was not present at the time of the incident.

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On October 3, 2023, the CPS caseworker made face-to-face contact with 8-year-old, 6-year-old and 9-year-old siblings and the father at the father's home. The children were sleeping during this contact as it was late in the evening.

On October 4, 2023, ODHS received a second report concerning possible lack of supervision and safety of the other children in the home due to the recent child fatality. This report was documented as a case note on the open case.

On October 4, 2023, the CPS caseworker made face-to-face contact with the mother and her roommate at their home with law enforcement present. They spoke briefly about the events leading up to the incident before the mother reported she did not want to speak about it anymore as it was too difficult. The roommate was asked about statements they made to police regarding the mother's behavior a few days leading up to the incident. They reported they do not share a room; however they could hear the mother in the middle of the night and believed she was having night terrors due to lack of sleep from the family having COVID-19. They also indicated this was the first time they had noticed her acting strangely.

The CPS caseworker then made face-to-face contact with the father at his home. The father reported he and the mother did not have the best co-parenting relationship and he was aware of her mental health concerns. He expressed concerns for his children following the loss of their sibling and advocated for them accessing counseling services. The caseworker discussed referral options for the children.

The CPS caseworker made several additional contacts with law enforcement throughout the CPS assessment as it related to updates on the criminal investigation. It was learned law enforcement reviewed video camera footage of the incident from the neighbor's door camera. The driver of the truck involved was driving approximately 5 miles per hour when the camera footage showed one of the child's siblings running across the street and the truck driving past. It was unclear when the child was hit due to part of the video footage being blocked. The mother was seen outside with the children at the time and was seen running over to the child and screaming. The driver of the vehicle got out and then ran back to get his phone and called 911. It appeared the child was hit while the mother was crouched

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down with her hands out in front of her, however it was unclear if she was pushing the child or if she had fallen to her knees when she noticed the car coming. The mother had reported to the mental health team on the scene that she did not push the child or do anything wrong. She then reported her name was a Hollywood actor who played a role in a movie. The mother was asked by the mental health team if this was her split personality, and she denied this stating the person mentioned was someone she knew through networking but had never met them in person. The mother reported she used to attend therapy; however it did not appear she was engaged in services at the time. The mother's roommate reported to the mental health team a couple of days prior to the accident they noticed the mother was forcing her children to stay awake and telling them if they went to sleep, they would "go to the dark side."

Through interviews with the parents conducted on the scene by law enforcement and the CPS caseworker, it was learned the mother had reported the family had tested positive for COVID-19 and had been staying home from school and work that week. The mother reported they had been inside the home most of the day when they decided to go out and get some fresh air. She stated the children would often skateboard down the driveway when playing outside. The child was reportedly sitting down on the skateboard and started to go down the driveway when the mother had noticed a car coming. She reported that she yelled "stop," however it was too late, and it all happened so fast.

The father reported he had heard the mother's social media had concerning posts a few weeks prior to the incident. He stated the posts appeared to be ramblings of what she thought was true. He believed when times were tough for the mother, times would be hard for the children as well. The father reportedly hadn't seen the children regularly in three months; however he had the children overnight for a visit the weekend prior to the child passing away. He reported after an incident where the child broke their leg in his care, the children started having visits with the mother and eventually ended up staying with her full-time.

The CPS caseworker gathered collateral information from the mother's friend who reported poor conditions of the mother's home. It was unclear if the conditions were new and due to her experiencing grief. The friend

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expressed concern the mother was in and out of lucid conversations and had at one point called the friend “mom.” This collateral expressed concern the mother would harm herself and her children to “get to the eternal life” she was talking about. It was believed the mother was potentially having a psychotic episode and in need of grief counseling.

The police reports associated with this incident contained interviews of the child’s family members, neighbors and people who were on scene. To summarize these reports, law enforcement determined the mother had made concerning statements to first responders on scene about having powers that could come from her hands. The mother’s roommate advised he did not believe there were concerns with mental health, however her behavior was notably different over the past few days and provided several examples.

The driver of the vehicle involved in the fatality was contacted and interviewed by law enforcement. The driver reported they were driving down the road when they struck the child and observed the child had trauma to the head and was unresponsive and not breathing. The driver did not show any signs of impairment and was cooperating with the investigation. The driver reported they were always careful around the family’s home since the children were generally playing in the street and known to jump out in front of cars. The driver stated they had seen one of the children on the left side of the road and was watching them when the child came from the other side of the road and went under the vehicle.

Various neighbors voiced concerns to law enforcement regarding the children frequently playing outside unsupervised in the street, including various neighbors stating they had spoken with the mother about this concern in the past.

On October 6, 2023, the CPS caseworker and CPS supervisor made face-to-face contact with the father and the child’s siblings in the community. The siblings made no concerning disclosures during this contact. The 8-year-old sibling was willing to talk about the incident, however the 9-year-old and 6-year-old declined. Due to concerns with the mother’s untreated mental health, ODHS implemented a safety plan where the child’s siblings stayed with their father, with third-party supervised visitation with their

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mother. The father reported he would be applying for temporary emergency custody of the children.

Later that evening, the CPS caseworker made face-to-face contact with the father, stepmom, and the child's siblings at their home.

On October 10, 2023, the CPS caseworker spoke with the father who reported no concerns interacting with the mother during the child's memorial service. The father exchanged numbers with the mother's roommate to set up visits between the child's siblings and mother. The father also reported he would be going to court on October 13, 2023, for an immediate danger order and provided notice to the mother but she had not responded.

On October 18, 2023, the CPS caseworker corresponded with the mother via text message to inquire about any agency supports needed. The mother responded she was OK but did not fully understand why there was a need for a safety plan as she felt she provided adequate care for her children on her own and denied having any mental health symptoms.

Throughout the CPS assessment, the CPS caseworker made several collateral contact calls with the mother's roommate. The roommate reported the mother had several community and friend supports checking on her, however later indicated she was continuing to isolate herself in her room and not eating. They expressed concern she would be unable to pay rent as she was not working. They later expressed concern for the mother's mental stability as they could hear her the night prior talking to herself.

On October 19, 2023, the CPS caseworker made face-to-face contact with the father and 9-year-old and 6-year-old siblings for further interviews and evaluation. During the interview, the 6-year-old sibling disclosed they were playing outside while their mother was watching them prior to the incident occurring. They described the child riding on the 9-year-old sibling's skateboard when there was a car coming and the child was hit by a car. They stated the 9-year-old sibling had gone to get a toy from their friend's house prior to the incident. The 9-year-old sibling spoke about their father's home and mother's home and provided details about each home. They presented behaviors that were parentified as they described caring for their siblings and trying to problem solve when their mother was sleeping. The 9-year-old sibling did not speak about witnessing the death of the child.

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On October 26, 2023, the 8-year-old sibling was interviewed and professionally evaluated. During the interview, they stated they did not witness the incident of concern as they were sleeping. There was a noted concern of neglect by the evaluator that the 8-year-old and 9-year-old siblings were taking care of their younger siblings while the mother was sleeping or at work/out of the home. Additional concerns were noted regarding the mother's untreated mental health struggles possibly interfering with her ability to provide for the children's basic needs, both physical and emotional. The evaluation recommended the children engage in counseling services to process the loss of their sibling as well as ongoing concerns involving their mother's mental health.

On November 1, 2023, the CPS caseworker contacted the father who reported the mother had only seen the children twice since he was granted temporary emergency custody. She was not responding to the petition for modifying their parenting time. He said he was trying to be flexible with the mother so she could see the children, however she was not responding to his texts or phone calls. ODHS provided the father with assistance needed for rent as well as food for the month.

Throughout the month of December 2023, the CPS caseworker made phone contact with the father and collaterals at the children's school. The father reported a modified custody order had defaulted to him because the mother had not responded. It was later learned this did not include the 6-year-old sibling, and the father reported he would also be filing for custody of the sibling through the courts. The CPS caseworker had a discussion with the father about safe co-parenting and visitation planning between the mother and the child's siblings. The father recognized the mother's mental illness behaviors and expressed he would be seeking advice through the courts on how to address future concerns. The father also expressed his understanding that specific events caused elevated stress for the mother resulting in increasing mental health symptoms. School collaterals expressed concern for the children's lack of school attendance and support the family needed with transportation. There were no reported concerns for the children's safety while in the care of their father, and collaterals shared the children appeared to be adjusting well.

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On January 10, 2024 the CPS caseworker gathered collateral information from a maternal relative. The relative reported the mother was posting concerning things on her social media up until December 2023. The relative recalled the mother's mental health symptoms appeared to fluctuate and seemed to worsen after the death of the mother's father. On this same date, the CPS caseworker gathered collateral information from the mother's roommate. It was reported the 8-year-old sibling had an overnight visit at the mother's home over the weekend. The roommate stated the mother stayed in her room for much of the time while the 8-year-old sibling spent their time with the roommate and their child.

On January 10, 2024, the CPS caseworker contacted the father and 6-year-old and 8-year-old siblings at the father's home. The children were noted to appear happy and playing games during this contact. The CPS caseworker discussed established custody orders with the father.

The CPS caseworker attempted to engage the mother through in person and phone contact throughout the month of January 2024, however had only received one text message from the mother asking if the father had physical custody of the siblings. The mother also stated she had not been able to have contact with the children since Christmas.

At the conclusion of this CPS assessment, the allegation of Neglect to the 4-year-old child by the mother was unable to be determined. Video footage of the incident involving the child's death was obstructed and unclear if the mother had been neglectful however multiple neighbors reported they had expressed concerns for the children's safety while playing outside previously. Additional concerns for the mother's mental health condition, leading up to this incident, were reported by several collaterals however it was unclear what her mental state was at the time of the child's death. The allegations of threat of harm to the 6-year-old, 8-year-old, and 9-year-old siblings by the mother was determined to be founded based on the mother's untreated mental health condition. Through interviews and collateral contacts, it was learned that the mother's mental health was declining and she was exhibiting symptoms that were impacting her ability to safely care for her children as well as meet her own needs.

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Description of relevant prior Department reports regarding the mother:

Date of report:	Allegation(s):	Disposition(s):
May 30, 2014	Threat of Harm by the Father	Unable to Determine
Assignment decision: Within 24 Hours	Neglect by the Father	Unfounded

On May 30, 2014, the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) received a report alleging threat of harm and neglect to the 4-month-old sibling by the father. It was reported the mother disclosed the father had been assaulting her, resulting in bruising to her arm as well as damage to the home and items such as walls and a television. It was reported the sibling was present during incidents of domestic violence, however, there were no reports of harm to the sibling. The reporter was informed there was marijuana in the home as well as empty beer bottles. The mother reported she was not yet ready to go to a domestic violence shelter.

On May 30, 2014, the CPS caseworker called the reporting party and left a message, and they called the mother and scheduled a home visit for June 4, 2014. The mother reported she was not allowing the father in the home for the time being. The CPS caseworker also noted as of this date, there was one police contact for the family with no arrests made at the time of contact.

On June 4, 2014, the CPS caseworker made face-to-face contact with the mother and sibling in their home. The sibling was observed to be on track developmentally. The mother denied any physical violence apart from one occasion when the father threw a bottle of formula at her. She reported concerns for the father's growing anger issues and stated he has punched holes in walls and broke the television. She asked him to move out and he was living with his parents. She was only allowing supervised visits and would not allow him back in the home until he completed anger management. The mother denied using marijuana regularly and denied the father used regularly and drank one to two beers a week. She did not feel his behaviors were the result of substance use.

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On June 5, 2014, the CPS caseworker called the father at his parents' home and left a message. Another message was sent to the father on June 27, 2014, and ultimately contact with the father did not occur in this assessment.

At the conclusion of this CPS assessment, it was determined the allegation of threat of harm to the 4-month-old sibling by the father would be coded unable to determine as there was insufficient information to make a founded or unfounded disposition. The allegation of neglect to the 4-month-old sibling by the father would be unfounded as there did not appear the father's marijuana or alcohol use impacted his parenting.

Date of report: April 26, 2015	Allegation(s): Neglect by the Mother Neglect by the Father	Disposition(s): Not Applicable Not Applicable
Assignment decision: Closed at Screening		

On April 26, 2015, ODHS received a report alleging neglect to the newborn sibling and 1-year-old sibling by their parents. It was reported upon birth of the sibling on April 26, 2015, the newborn sibling and the mother had tested positive for marijuana. The mother was reported to be upfront and honest with hospital staff regarding her marijuana use throughout her pregnancy. The mother's prenatal doctors did not report any concern. The reporting party stated both mother and father used marijuana regularly.

It was determined this report did not meet criteria for a CPS assessment and was closed at screening.

Date of report: May 24, 2016	Allegation(s): Neglect by the Mother	Disposition(s): Not Applicable
Assignment decision: Within 5 Days		

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On May 24, 2016, ODHS received a report alleging neglect to the 2-year-old and 1-year-old siblings by their mother. It was reported the children kept getting out of the family's apartment unsupervised. On one occasion, the 2-year-old sibling was nude and observed walking down the stairs from the apartment into the parking lot. The mother was observed looking for the 2-year-old sibling both inside and outside the apartment, and eventually found them. Previously in the week, the mother was outside smoking when the 1-year-old sibling got out of the second level family apartment and crawled up to the third floor. The caller noted the type of staircase was concrete with open gaps between each step. There was a third incident about a month prior when the children got out. This case was opened as an alternative response case and would not require a disposition at the conclusion.

On May 25, 2016, the CPS caseworker called the reporting party and left a message. Then phone calls were made to phone numbers believed to belong to the parents. Criminal history and child welfare history for both parents were reviewed. This same day, the father returned the phone call, he reported having parenting time on the weekends and knew the 2-year-old sibling was able to unlock and open doors. Also, this same day, the CPS caseworker spoke with the mother and a home visit was scheduled.

The home visit took place on May 26, 2016, and law enforcement attended with the CPS caseworker. The mother talked about feeling overwhelmed as a single mom with her only support being the maternal grandfather. She admitted the 2-year-old sibling knew how to open the front door, and it had been a problem. She reported she smoked cigarettes outside on the apartment balcony. The front door handle was observed to be a long handle instead of a typical sphere-shaped knob, which when turned from the inside would unlock the door.

The mother was open to receiving services and resources, though admitted she had very few supports and wanted to be as independent as possible. The 1-year-old and 2-year-old siblings were both observed, but due to their age and development, they were not interviewed. The 1-year-old sibling was noted to have an eye condition for which surgery was scheduled.

The CPS caseworker heard from the family skill builder provider throughout the case that contact with the mother wasn't occurring despite several

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attempts. When the CPS caseworker spoke with the mother about this, she was defensive and felt the concerns regarding her children were disproportionate. She ultimately declined services from the agency. The mother reported the father obtained a new lock for the door and she intended to install it. She also stated she would refrain from smoking until the children were sleeping or could be supervised.

On July 12, 2016, the CPS caseworker completed an interview with the father over the phone as his work schedule would not allow for an in-person home visit. The father did not report any concerns for the mother's parenting practices. He understood she bought a new lock for the door but could not confirm if it had been installed.

The CPS caseworker spoke with the children's pediatric office, and they did not report any concerns for the mother's ability to meet the children's medical needs. They reported one incident in which the mother and father arrived together and were seemingly involved in a verbal argument. Law enforcement responded, but the parents calmed down by the time law enforcement arrived. It seemed the father was heard saying to the mother he had a right to be at the medical appointment.

The CPS caseworker also spoke with the maternal grandfather, who reported being a support to the mother and children. He was seeing the children weekly and supporting the mother around applying for employment. He denied parenting concerns for the mother but did report the parents were not mature enough to be a couple at this time.

This CPS assessment was closed with no disposition as this case was opened as an alternative response.

Date of report: October 13, 2017	Allegation(s): Threat of Harm by the Mother	Disposition(s): Not Applicable
Assignment decision: Closed at Screening		

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On October 13, 2017, ODHS received a report alleging threat of harm to the 2-year-old and 3-year-old siblings by their mother. It was reported the humane society become involved after a neighbor saw an emaciated dog on the family's balcony, which resulted in a citation to the mother. The dog was removed from the family home. The mother reported her children are a bigger priority to feed than the dog. She was reported to be evasive of the humane society agent.

It was determined this report did not meet criteria for a CPS assessment and was closed at screening.

Date of report: October 23, 2017	Allegation(s): Threat of Harm by the Mother	Disposition(s): Not Applicable
Assignment decision: Closed at Screening		

On October 23, 2017, ODHS received a report alleging threat of harm to the 2-year-old and 3-year-old siblings by their mother. The reporting party was concerned the mother was acting erratically ever since her father died by suicide in September 2017. She arrived at her father's residence and was upset her brother was present. The mother began breaking items throughout the house and threw items at her brother. Law enforcement responded to this incident; however, no action was taken. The mother conspired that her family, law enforcement, Veteran's Affairs and the funeral home murdered her father. She once arrived at the funeral home to stop the burial and called law enforcement more than 100 times asking them to investigate the murder.

It was determined this report did not meet criteria for a CPS assessment and was closed at screening.

Date of report: November 25, 2018	Allegation(s): Neglect by the Mother	Disposition(s): Not Applicable
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Assignment decision: Closed at Screening		
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On November 25, 2018, ODHS received a report alleging neglect to the newborn child by the mother. It was reported the mother left a hospital against medical advice at 2 a.m. with the child after declining all testing for them. The mother disclosed there is possibly a history of or current intimate partner violence, and the reporter believed the perpetrator of this might be the father. It was noted the mother and father had three other children who were 1, 3, and 4 years old. The reporter also stated the mother uses marijuana, although the hospital was not able to test the child's meconium or urine. During prenatal care, the mother reported she smoked three to four times per day and did not intend to quit.

It was determined this report did not meet criteria for a CPS assessment and was closed at screening.

Date of report: May 30, 2019	Allegation(s): Threat of Harm by the Father	Disposition(s): Unfounded
Assignment decision: Within 24 Hours	Sexual Abuse by the Father	Unfounded
	Neglect by the Mother	Founded
	Neglect by the Father	Founded

On May 30, 2019, ODHS received a report alleging sexual abuse to the 5-year-old sibling by the father, and threat of harm to the 4-year-old sibling by the father. Also in the family unit was the 2-year-old sibling and the child, who was an infant. The reporter stated in May 2019, the mother had learned the father was sneaking the 5-year-old sibling out at night and believed the 5-year-old sibling was being sexually abused by individuals they hadn't had contact with. It was reported the 5-year-old and 4-year-old siblings were playing a game with their dolls and the mother saw the 5-year-old sibling with their pants down and their hand in the 4-year-old sibling's pants. She also noted the children acting out sexually explicit

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actions with the dolls. It was noted law enforcement was contacted regarding this information. Allegations of threat of harm and sexual abuse to the 5-year-old and 4-year-old siblings by the father and neglect to all four children by both parents was assigned for CPS assessment with a 24-hour response time.

In summary, the police report associated with these concerns, and documented in the case file, stated the mother was told by the 5-year-old sibling the father was sneaking him out at night to hang out with the father's friends. When the mother confronted the father, he became angry. She then decided to move the children from their rooms to her room at night and stated the father would sleep on the couch. The police report summarized she observed the 5-year-old and 4-year-old touching each other's genital areas and acting out sexually explicit actions with their dolls. The mother reported to police the 5-year-old sibling was bleeding from their anus and 4-year-old sibling was bed wetting.

On May 30, 2019, the CPS caseworker along with law enforcement contacted the mother, who acknowledged the reported concerns and believed she was being protective by keeping the children in her room during evening and sleeping hours. The mother reported the same concerns documented in the police report and additionally reported concerns about the ways she believed the 5-year-old and 4-year-old siblings were being sexually abused. The mother disengaged when the father arrived home. The father was interviewed and denied the allegations. He privately expressed concern to the CPS caseworker about the mother's paranoid behaviors and delusional thinking. Both parents denied seeing any maternal family recently and stated the last contact was in 2017. The mother reported she believed her siblings killed her father even though the autopsy confirmed he died by suicide.

The 5-year-old and 4-year-old siblings were interviewed. The 4-year-old talked about being touched on their genitals, but when asked by who, they stated nobody. The 5-year-old sibling made a report the maternal relatives touched the genital areas of themselves and their siblings but stated their parents didn't have any family in the vicinity. They provided limited and at times confusing reports about what happened.

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The 5-year-old and 4-year-old siblings were further interviewed and evaluated by professionals on July 31, 2018; however, the evaluation was complicated by the mother's undiagnosed mental health and presentation at the evaluation. There was significant concern the mother was experiencing delusional thinking, and this impacted the 5-year-old sibling's ability to report on their own experiences. There was concern the mother's paranoia was undetected by the 5-year-old sibling, who spent most of their time primarily with their mom. Per the staff at the children's advocacy center, they felt based on the mother's presentation, speech, and behaviors, it was imperative she have a psychiatric evaluation completed. Further, until evaluated, the safety of the children in her care would be difficult to understand.

Additional home visits and contact with the mother and father occurred during the CPS assessment. The father reported he had done his best to be supportive of the mother, but her paranoid behaviors had been escalating over the years. The CPS caseworker spoke with the father's relatives, who reported concern for the mother's mental health and how it has deteriorated over time. They provided several examples of this observation.

On August 2, 2019, a home visit was completed. The CPS caseworker noted extensive marijuana paraphernalia in the mother's bathroom. There were children's toothbrushes as well as baby wipes on the counter where the paraphernalia was found. The mother reported she smoked about three times a day while caring for the children. The CPS caseworker also noted concerns for the state of the home. A safety plan was put in place with the father and paternal relatives. The CPS caseworker was concerned upon learning the children would be leaving, the mother began coaching the children against their father.

The CPS caseworker contacted one of the maternal relatives alleged to be sexually abusing the children. The maternal relative reported she had not had any contact with the mother since 2017 and was living approximately four hours away from the family. The maternal relative denied she ever sexually abused the children and had no reason to believe other maternal relatives were sexually abusing the children.

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The allegations of sexual abuse and threat of harm to the 5-year-old and 4-year-old siblings was determined to be unfounded. However, due to the significant untreated mental health concerns the mother presented with and its impact on the children, as well as the concern for the state of home and the mother's marijuana use, an allegation of neglect to all four children by the mother was added during the CPS assessment and determined to be founded. Additionally, due the concerns that the father knew of the mother's mental health and the impact on the children, allegations of neglect to all four children by the father was added during the CPS assessment and coded as founded. On August 5, 2019, the department further intervened due to the mother's untreated mental health. The children were placed in their father's home with an in-home safety plan and supervised family time with their mother through ODHS.

Date of report: August 20, 2019	Allegation(s): Sexual Abuse by Aunt Sexual Abuse by Uncle	Disposition(s): Not Applicable Not Applicable
Assignment decision: Closed at Screening		

On August 20, 2019, ODHS received a report alleging sex abuse to the 5-year-old and 4-year-old siblings by their maternal relatives. All four children were noted to be in an open case with the department and residing with their father at their paternal grandparent's home.

During an interview with the CPS caseworker on an open CPS assessment involving allegations reported to the department on May 30, 2019, the 5-year-old sibling disclosed their maternal relatives had touched their genitals and buttocks. They also disclosed the father was at work when these events occurred, and the mother was present and had kicked the relatives out of the house. The 5-year-old sibling was unable to say where or when this occurred.

The CPS caseworker interviewed the 4-year-old sibling regarding general body safety concerns. They talked about someone touching their genitals

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however, they were unclear how many times this occurred, who had done this or when this happened.

The mother reported observing the children attempting to touch each other's privates and play pretend sexual acts with their toys and dolls. The mother reported the 5-year-old, and 4-year-old siblings would talk about "tickle time" with their maternal relatives but could not describe what tickle time was. The mother reported her maternal relatives lived in her apartment complex but had not spoken since her father's death in 2017. Both parents denied ever seeing her family since their last contact on September 27, 2017.

The father reported to the CPS caseworker the mother had accused him of drugging her coffee and vape pen in the past. He further described her having unusual behaviors such as being possessive, jealous, hostile, and combative. He stated she was making false accusations of him taking the children out at night and felt she was experiencing some type of paranoia.

It was reported the children had not seen their maternal relatives since 2017. On July 31, 2018, the children were further interviewed and evaluated by professionals and there was no finding any sex abuse had occurred. It was believed the mother's mental health and the things she was saying were causing the children to make these statements.

It was determined this report did not meet criteria for a CPS assessment and was closed at screening.

Date of report: February 21, 2021	Allegation(s): Mental Injury by the Mother	Disposition(s): Not Applicable
Assignment decision: Closed at Screening		

On February 21, 2021, ODHS received a report alleging mental injury to the child and their 7-year-old, 5-year-old and 4-year-old siblings by their mother. There was a report of an altercation between both parents when the father was dropping off groceries at the mother's residence. The

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reporter stated they saw the mother yelling at the father and began throwing things at him. It was unknown if the father had been injured or what items had been thrown. Additionally, the mother had claimed the father's new partner was hitting the children as they were returning from their visits with bruises. The mother was reported to bang her walls and ceilings to "bother the kids" and she has told the children her neighbors are pedophiles and will hurt them. Law enforcement was reportedly at the residence several times due to reports of the mother yelling through the walls and concerns for her mental health. The children were described to look fine, but the reporter was concerned with how the mother's mental health was impacting the children.

It was unknown how the mother's behavior was impacting her children as they were reported to appear to be in good physical appearance. An assessment regarding the concerns for the children reportedly having bruising after being at their father's house was completed in September 2020, and determined to be unfounded. It was determined this report did not meet criteria for a CPS assessment and was closed at screening.

Date of report: March 23, 2023	Allegation(s): Not Applicable	Disposition(s): Not Applicable
Assignment decision: Closed at Screening		

On March 23, 2023, ODHS received a report concerning the 4-year-old child and three siblings. It was reported the children resided with their mother and had recently begun visitation with their father. The 9-year-old sibling was reported to have expressed suicidal ideation since visitation with the father started. It was unclear if the sibling had hurt themselves or tried to harm themselves in the past. The sibling was reportedly participating in counseling and the mother was engaged in seeking treatment and other supportive services for them.

There were additional reports regarding concerns for lack of food at their father's house as they were returning to their mother's home hungry. The

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father and the children disclosed to the mother there was no food in the home. It was unclear how long the children went without eating or if they accessed other food resources. Additionally, the children reported experiencing verbal and physical abuse by their father in the past.

The mother reported the father had broken the 4-year-old child's leg in half; however, it was unclear when this had occurred. It was also unclear if the other children had been physically abused.

It was determined this report did not meet criteria for a CPS assessment and was closed at screening.

Date of report: May 12, 2023	Allegation(s): Not Applicable	Disposition(s): Not Applicable
Assignment decision: Closed at Screening		

On May 12, 2023, ODHS received a report stating the 7-year-old sibling disclosed being fearful of their father and did not want to attend a scheduled visit with him over the weekend. The sibling reported the father yelled at them and their siblings when they were being too loud and has spanked them. They also disclosed their father had hit them on the arms and on top of the head with an open hand. They reported they felt unsafe with their stepmother because she "popped" her sibling on the mouth with an open hand on the lips. When asked about any concerns for substance use or mental health in the home, the sibling reported the father was "crazy" and needed pills. The reporter believed the 7-year-old sibling had undiagnosed ADHD and the 9-year-old sibling had struggled with behaviors at school and is seeing a therapist. The 9-year-old sibling's behaviors were noted to worsen after visiting his father on the weekends.

It was determined this report did not meet criteria for a CPS assessment and was closed at screening.

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Date of report: June 6, 2023 Assignment decision: Closed at Screening	Allegation(s): Not Applicable	Disposition(s): Not Applicable
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On June 6, 2023, ODHS received a report concerning the 9-year-old, 8-year-old and 6-year-old siblings in the care of their father. It was reported the 9-year-old sibling had engaged in sexual contact with the 8-year-old sibling recently after witnessing sexual activity at his father's home. It was believed the sexual activity observed was possibly accidental, however the context of the situation was unclear.

About three months prior to this report, the mother reportedly walked in and saw the two siblings engaging in sexually problematic behaviors with one another. The mother intervened before any contact could occur. The 8-year-old sibling was also reported to be displaying sexually reactive behaviors at school, as well as at home, and the mother was actively searching for a therapist for them due to the concerns. The 9-year-old sibling was described as verbally impulsive at school and on a special behavior plan. They recently began weekly therapy and needed an individual education plan, which was anticipated to begin the following school year. The reporter felt the mother needed a lot of support and skill building around her parenting. The mother had expressed wanting the 9-year-old sibling to be in a residential program where she could visit them when she was able and made statements that she felt her mental health diagnosis was "just an excuse."

It was determined this report did not meet criteria for a CPS assessment and was closed at screening.

Date of report: June 12, 2023 Assignment decision: Within 72 Hours	Allegation(s): Neglect by the Father Mental Injury by the Mother	Disposition(s): Unfounded, Unable to be Determined
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On June 12, 2023, ODHS received a report alleging neglect by the father, and mental injury by the mother to the 9-year-old sibling. It was reported the 9-year-old sibling had been experiencing an increase in behavioral issues. There were previous concerns reported regarding the sibling witnessing the father and their father's partner having intercourse, which was believed to be accidental. Additionally, there were reported concerns regarding the mother's impact on the sibling's mental health due to statements she makes and how she reacts to the sibling's relationship with their father. The mother was reported to alienate the sibling from the father, preventing the father from being able to protect the sibling from concerns for mental injury by the mother.

It was reported the mother sent the father lengthy messages accusing him of acting out sexually in front of the children. It was noted the mother had previously accused the father of taking the children out of the home to be sexually molested, which was previously assessed on May 30, 2019, and determined to be unfounded. There was concern the mother was attempting to have the children make false allegations towards their father.

Some of the concerns were previously reported to the department, however this report was the fourth report involving a child under 5 years old. Allegations of neglect by the father and mental injury by the mother to the 9-year-old sibling were assigned for CPS assessment with a 72-hour response time.

On June 14, 2023, the CPS caseworker made face-to-face contact with the father and current partner at their home. Both were interviewed about the concerns and denied the allegations. The father reported his partner received a message from the mother on June 6, 2023, stating "sex is normal, not for children to see or act out." The father reported his partner was at work and not home during his parenting time with the children that weekend.

The father's partner was interviewed and reported the same information as the father to the CPS caseworker. They reported they had attempted to

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build a healthy relationship with the mother, however, would receive random attacks via text messages from her. They believed the mother was not mentally sound and was unsure if she was taking any medication. They reported all the children, especially the 9-year-old sibling, appear to be emotional after parenting time with the father.

The father and his partner were surprised at what was reported and the messages they received from the mother. The father believed the mother was using the allegations to manipulate the 9-year-old sibling. The home was observed by the CPS caseworker to have sufficient food with no safety concerns noted. The family requested assistance with diapers and wipes. The father and his partner's 1-year-old child was observed to be sleeping in the home and noted to be too young to be interviewed.

Collateral contacts were gathered from the children's school social worker and counselor on June 15, 2023. The school counselor expressed concerns for both the 9-year-old sibling and their mother's mental health. The collateral was told by the mother the 9-year-old sibling had been sexually abused and the 8-year-old sibling had been displaying sexual behaviors. The children had not made any disclosures to the school. The mother stated the 9-year-old sibling was seeing a therapist and she appeared to be overwhelmed by the situation. The mother further expressed concern about the 9-year-old sibling wanting to die. When the school asked the 9-year-old sibling about this, they denied they had any desire to die. The child and their siblings were noted to be well cared for with no concerns of their appearance. It was believed the mother wanted the best for the 9-year-old sibling, however she was struggling to provide care for them and needed mental health support.

The CPS caseworker made face-to-face contact with the mother and all four children at the ODHS office on June 15, 2023. The 9-year-old sibling was interviewed by the CPS caseworker and made no concerning disclosures. The 9-year-old sibling also confirmed their father's partner was not home at the time of their visit. Documentation reflects the other children were not interviewed due to their age but were noted to appear happy and healthy. The mother stated the allegations in the report were not true and she could not control what the children say after visiting their father. She stated the 9-year-old sibling had been acting out inappropriately.

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On June 15, 2023, the CPS caseworker made face-to-face contact with the father's 5-year-old stepson, who also resided in the home. Documentation reflects they were not interviewed but presented as healthy and well cared for.

On July 26, 2023, the CPS caseworker made collateral contact with the paternal grandmother. The collateral denied any concerns of sex abuse of any kind happening to any of the children by their father or his partner. There were reported concerns for the mother's mental health, including hallucinations, and grieving the loss of her father dying by suicide. The CPS caseworker made a collateral contact with the father's friend, who had been told about the concerns with the mother's mental health and fabricating allegations against the father. The collateral believed the mother was withholding the 9-year-old sibling from the father by not letting them stay there overnight. There were no concerns reported for the children in the care of their father.

Circumstances surrounding the allegations in the assessment indicated the children were currently residing with their mother and she was not following the parenting plan. A year prior to this report, the father had remarried, and collaterals reported the mother was not taking this change very well.

The allegation of mental injury by the mother to the 9-year-old sibling was unable to be determined. Based on the information gathered, it was unclear if the mother's behaviors were directly impacting the sibling, however there was evidence to suggest an ongoing pattern of an effort to interfere with the sibling's relationship with the father. The allegation of neglect by the father was determined to be unfounded. Based on interviews with collaterals, the 9-year-old sibling, the father and his partner, there was no evidence to suggest neglect had occurred.

Date of report: June 21, 2023	Allegation(s): Not Applicable	Disposition(s): Not Applicable
Assignment decision: Closed at Screening		

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On June 21, 2023, ODHS received a report the 8-year-old sibling was sexually abused by the father approximately three years ago. It was also reported the child and their siblings had been physically abused by their father, including breaking the child's femur.

This report did not contain information directly from the 8-year-old sibling and was previously reported and assessed on May 30, 2019 and August 20, 2019. It was noted the child and their siblings were previously residing with their father but had returned to their mother's care with weekly visitation. The paternal grandparents were reported to ensure the children were being fed during these visits. The 8-year-old sibling was reported to be developmentally on track and able to articulate her needs. The children were described as having clean hygiene with no other concerns noted.

It was determined this report did not meet criteria for a CPS assessment and was closed at screening.

Description of relevant prior Department reports regarding the father:

Date of report: May 6, 2020	Allegation(s): Physical Abuse by an Unknown Perpetrator	Disposition(s): Unfounded
Assignment decision: Within 24 Hours		

On May 6, 2020, ODHS received a report alleging physical abuse to the 1-year-old child by an unknown perpetrator. The child presented at the emergency room with a fracture to their left femur the night prior. The father explained the injury occurred when the child fell out of bed onto a carpeted floor. Doctors diagnosed the injury as a "toddler fracture," stating it was common for toddlers to receive a fracture injury in the tibia and less common in the femur. The mother came to the hospital to visit the child and expressed concern the injury was caused by the father and his partner. The mother reported this was not the first time the child or their siblings had returned to her home with suspicious injuries. She provided photos to the reporter, showing the child with substantial bruising to their face with

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questionable non-accidental marks and bruising to their arm. Allegations of physical abuse to the child by an unknown perpetrator was assigned for CPS assessment with a 24-hour response time. A companion case was assigned to the father's spouse regarding allegations of physical abuse by an unknown perpetrator to the spouse's child who resided in the home.

On the same day of the report, the CPS caseworker contacted the child and the mother at the emergency hospital with a law enforcement detective. The child was noted to be unable to be interviewed due to their age. The child was observed to be sleeping with a bandage wrapped around their left leg. The mother reported she had not witnessed the incident when the injury occurred, and the father had left the child with her.

The CPS caseworker then contacted the father, his partner and the 3-year-old, 5-year-old and 6-year-old siblings at their father's home. The home was observed to be safe and noted to have an appropriate bed for a toddler to use where the children slept. The father's partner was interviewed and described the morning of the incident when the father had left for work, leaving the children in their care. They reported the child was laying on their back, on their bed, when they noticed the child needed a diaper change. When they left the child on their bed to retrieve wipes from their hallway closet, they heard a thud and the child crying. They returned to their bedroom to find the child on the floor screaming. They picked the child up and noticed the child's leg was dangling as if it was not attached. They placed the child on their bed and moved the child's leg while attempted to check what was wrong. While moving the child's leg, the child began to scream louder so they dialed 911 for emergency response and later contacted the father by phone to share with him what happened. When emergency personnel arrived, they asked if the child's leg had been dislocated and was told it had probably been something else. The father's partner was noted to be openly engaged and willing to answer questions during the interview. The father was then interviewed about the incident. He reported while he was on his way to work, he received a call from his partner. He described his partner crying on the phone while reporting paramedics were at the home. He learned the child had fallen off their bed when his partner went to get wipes in the middle of changing the child's diaper. The father's partner had told him they heard the child make a loud scream they had never heard before and after picking the child up they saw

the child's leg was limp. The father reported his partner had been emotional since the child's incident.

The CPS caseworker then contacted a collateral who was the father to the partner's shared child, who also lived in the home. The former partner did not have any information pertaining to the incident and had learned about it from the partner. They stated they did not have safety concerns for their shared child or other children in the home.

On May 8, 2020, the CPS caseworker made face-to-face contact with the mother and all four children at the mother's residence. The home and sleeping conditions were observed with no concerns noted. The 6-year-old and 5-year-old siblings were separately interviewed with consent from the mother. The 6-year-old sibling initially reported they did not know anything about the incident involving the child. They then stated their stepmom had been playing a video game and the child was making a noise. When asked what they saw, they stated seeing the stepmom's son fall off the couch. They reported the mother had told them to tell the truth and they told the mother the same information. They reported they, along with their 5-year-old sibling, had peaked around the corner and saw the stepmom push the child. The 5-year-old sibling reported they had not seen the incident and did not know where the 6-year-old sibling was when it happened. When asked if their mom had said the child fell off a bed, they replied their 6-year-old sibling had told them. The mother confirmed with the CPS caseworker the 6-year-old sibling had disclosed this information to her, however she did not want to report it for fear ODHS would portray her negatively and she did not know what was true.

The mother reported the children had disclosed to her they get spanked by their stepmother. She also noticed the 6-year-old and 5-year-old siblings were frequently flinching and stated the father had also noticed this. She presented the CPS caseworker with photos of bruising on the child's head on her phone. The photos were reportedly taken in January through February 2020. She stated whenever she would bring up her concerns to the father, he would threaten to pick their children up and she would never see them again. She expressed concern she would not be believed due to her prior history with ODHS and felt she was portrayed negatively in the past.

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The CPS caseworker made follow-up contact with the father. He confirmed seeing the photos of the child's bruising and clarified the photos were sent to the mother by him. He stated he was upset the mother was reporting concerns for abuse as he had initially sent her the photos to update her of the child's accidental bruising while holding him. The father further explained he was holding the child on his lap while at his computer when the child accidentally hit his head on the desk. The mother had also sent him photos of marks on the 5-year-old sibling as she was curious if it was a rash and was now describing these photos as potential abuse.

The father expressed concern with the mother's marijuana use in the home, while around the children, as well as having a cold home. The CPS caseworker inquired about this concern with the mother who denied using marijuana in the home regularly. She reported when using marijuana, she would do so at night after all the children went to bed or when visiting with their father. She said she would smoke outside or in her bathroom with the door closed. She reported she uses marijuana to help her with her sleep and does not use while caring for the children. The CPS caseworker observed an area where the mother reported the marijuana would be stored and hidden, out of reach of children.

The mother reported she was actively searching for mental health services for herself, and her children but was primarily focused on finding resources for the 6-year-old sibling. The CPS caseworker had reviewed the mother's previous mental health assessment with her. She reported she was very emotional during that time and felt she had come a long way since then. The mother acknowledged her family had a history of extreme mental health issues and believed with this history the subject of mental health had been thrown on her, which in turn became the reason why she and her family had parted ways. She described her previous concerns with delusions but denied struggling with any part of her role as a parent. The father believed the mother was showing signs of mental stability and had no safety concerns for her ability to safely co-parent.

On June 10, 2020, the 6-year-old and 5-year-old siblings were further interviewed and evaluated by professionals. Prior to the interview, the mother reported her children had disclosed their stepmother had pushed them while she was playing video games. The mother expressed concern

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for the children visiting at their father's home as she was unsure what they did while visiting there. During the interview, the 6-year-old sibling was asked if anyone had ever spanked them, and they replied they did not remember. When asked if anyone had ever hurt them, they replied only their 3-year-old and 5-year-old siblings, who would bite and push them. When inquired if the child broke their leg, the 6-year-old sibling replied they did not know. They further stated their stepmother was "nice to us" and denied knowing about how the stepmom disciplined. During the interview with the 5-year-old sibling, they were asked if the child had been hurt. They said they heard their stepmother had pushed the child down off the bed but had not seen this happen. When asked how they heard about this, they said they did not know. When asked about discipline, they reported their stepmother had hit the child with their hands and spanks hard. When asked if they had seen the stepmother spank the child, one time or more than one time, they did not answer. The evaluation concluded there was a concern for exposure to high-risk environment based on the 5-year-old siblings' disclosures of their stepmom pushing the child, however it was difficult to determine if they had directly heard this happen or if they heard about it from another source. The child sustained a fracture to their femur for which the cause was undetermined and according to the mother had a history of bruising after being at the father's home. Additional concern was noted regarding the stepmom's 2-year-old son sustaining two fractured arms within a four-month period while in their care.

In summary, the law enforcement report documented previous discussions with the medical provider, indicating 50 percent chance the child's injuries could be a result of either a fall or abuse. The stepmother's accounts of what happened to police coincided with what was reported to ODHS. Law enforcement explained concerns for the fact the child had a broken leg and the stepmother's son had broken their arms twice. The father and stepmom understood these concerns; however they were adamant they would never lay a hand on the child. The stepmom hypothesized the child could have fallen off their bed because of their puppies, referencing the child really liked their dogs and they were constantly telling the child to sit down while the child attempted to stand up on furniture and the bed a lot. Law enforcement records indicated there was no evidence found to conclude the child's injury was caused by abuse.

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Both parents were noted to be cordial at the conclusion of the CPS assessment. While the father stated he had no safety concerns for the children in the care of his partner he expressed continuous disagreements with the mother over what he felt were false allegations. While the mother had initially stated discomfort with the children returning to the father's home, she later stated she was comfortable with this as both parents agreed not to leave the children alone in the care of the stepmom.

Throughout the course of the CPS assessment, the CPS caseworker made several collateral contacts with relatives who reported no concerns for the children's care.

The allegation of physical abuse by an unknown perpetrator to the 1-year-old child was determined to be unfounded based on a lack of evidence the stepmom had acted with abuse towards the child. Law enforcement confirmed with medical professionals the child's femur fracture could or could not have been a result of an accident. The 5-year-old sibling disclosed their stepmom had pushed the child; however it was unclear if they heard this information directly or if it came from another source and the 6-year-old sibling did not make any statements concerning abuse or neglect.

Date of report: September 14, 2020	Allegation(s): Physical Abuse by an Unknown Perpetrator, the Stepparent, and the Father	Disposition(s): Unfounded
Assignment decision: Within 24 Hours		

On September 14, 2020, ODHS received a report alleging physical abuse to the 1-year-old child by an unknown perpetrator, a stepparent, as well as the father. The child was observed with an unexplained injury after a visit with the father. It was reported the child was observed to have two to three unexplained linear marks appeared to be scratches on their left collarbone area. The child also had three red marks on their back, one of which appeared to be bruising. These injuries were observed by the mother after the child had returned to her care from visiting the father's home the week

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prior. It was also reported that the 3-year-old sibling had swelling and redness on their lip. They disclosed the injury was from the father's partner by hitting them hard on the face. They also disclosed the father had hit them in the arm, which was observed to be red at the time. The 5-year-old sibling disclosed the father had hit them on the arm approximately a week and a half prior and their arm was reported to appear red as well. The report noted there was no history of the father being physical with the children and no reported mental health concerns. The mother was noted to have a history of reported mental health concerns when she had made odd disclosures in the past, as well as a concern with her attempt to coach the children.

The father's partner had reported concerns for their ability to parent and noted their biological child had two arm breaks within a three- to four-month period while in their care. This report came in while there was an open CPS assessment for allegations of physical abuse to the 1-year-old child by an unknown perpetrator that was reported on May 6, 2020. Allegations of physical abuse to the child by an unknown perpetrator, physical abuse to 3-year-old sibling by the stepmother and physical abuse to the 5-year-old sibling by the father were assigned for CPS assessment with a 24-hour response time.

On September 14, 2020, the CPS caseworker contacted the mother to plan for the children to be seen at the emergency department that evening for an evaluation. Documentation does not reflect emergency records for this visit were requested, received, or reviewed as part of this CPS assessment.

On September 15, 2020, the CPS caseworker made face-to-face contact with the mother and all four children at their mother's residence. The mother agreed to the children being interviewed in private. The 1-year-old child was observed to have a faint mark on the middle-left part of their back. All the children were noted to have scrapes and bruising on their shins and knees, which appeared appropriate from playing and not suspicious. The 5-year-old sibling reported their marks were from falling on the ground or hitting a wooden post with their hand. The 6-year-old sibling reported they and their siblings did not have any injuries or illnesses and were not sure why they had been seen at the hospital the night prior. The

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3-year-old sibling made no disclosures to the CPS caseworker. The 6-year-old and 5-year-old siblings stated their father and stepmother discipline them by having them “face the wall.” The home was observed by the CPS caseworker to have adequate food and appropriate safe sleeping conditions.

On the same day, the CPS caseworker made face-to-face contact with the father and his partner at their home. Both the father and his partner had knowledge of the child’s marks and stated the child had climbed a bunk bed ladder and fell due to the 3-year-old sibling pushing the ladder. The child hit their back on a nearby table when they fell. The injury was noted by the CPS caseworker to be consistent with this explanation as it matched similar height of the table with the marks on the child’s back. The father and his partner denied the allegations of physical abuse to the 3-year-old and 5-year-old siblings. They reported they disciplined the children by having them face the wall, which corroborated with what the children had disclosed in their interview with the CPS caseworker. The CPS caseworker completed a walkthrough of the home and discussed needed safety items, such as gates, locks and safety doorknobs. The CPS caseworker discussed supervision planning with the father and his partner to not leave the children unsupervised, specifically near the ladder. The parents confirmed baby gates would be utilized as neither child would be able to climb over them or remove them when installed. Home safety items noted were later provided to both the mother and father by ODHS on October 15, 2020.

The police reports associated with this incident, in summary, stated the children did not make any disclosures regarding abuse and concluded the injuries to the child and his siblings appeared to be due to a lack of supervision by the father and his partner.

On September 15, 2020, the CPS caseworker consulted with medical professional providers to determine if further interviews were needed, and it was not recommended unless the children made further disclosures.

At the conclusion of this CPS assessment, the allegations of physical abuse to the child by an unknown perpetrator, physical abuse to the 3-year-old sibling by the stepmother and physical abuse to the 5-year-old sibling by the father were determined to be unfounded. The child’s injuries to their

back appeared to be consistent with the explanation of hitting a table after falling off a bunkbed ladder. The 3-year-old sibling made no concerning disclosures of abuse, and the 5-year-old sibling indicated their injuries were accidental and not a result of abuse.

Description of concerns regarding actions taken or not taken by the Department or law enforcement agencies in response to the critical incident or events that led to the critical incident:

The CIRT did not identify any actions or inactions by law enforcement or child welfare relevant to the critical incident or the events leading to the critical incident. However, the CIRT noted ODHS did not have an adequate understanding of the mother's significant mental health needs and how this impacted the children she was caring for, as well as the role this had in custodial conflict between the parents. The CIRT acknowledged child welfare professionals would benefit from increased access to internal and external experts when assessing and addressing a parent or caregiver with mental health conditions. ODHS employs consultants and coordinators who have expertise and advanced training in specific areas such as child safety and behavioral health. These subject matter experts are available for consultation with local offices but were underutilized in this case.

Recommendations for improvement in the administration and oversight of the child welfare system that are specific to the critical incident and any historical information reviewed by the team:

The CIRT recommends ODHS continue ongoing efforts to promote and encourage child welfare professionals' outreach and consultation within programs and with available subject matter experts. In addition to local ODHS supports such as managers, coaching and training specialists, and addiction and recovery teams, local offices may not be aware of the internal subject matter experts available and/or how to access them. To address this barrier, in December 2023 the Child Fatality Prevention and Review Program created and widely distributed a readily accessible subject matter expert resource list for child welfare professionals to support the necessary nuanced understanding of complex family dynamics and child safety.

The CIRT recommends that local child welfare leadership, in partnership with the Child Fatality Prevention and Review Program Behavioral Health

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Coordinator, work together to explore options to access qualified behavioral health experts on-site to support child welfare professionals assessing child safety and engaging families experiencing mental illness. This exploration and a strategy for implementation will be completed by April 2024.