

OIG2023 #55

Child No. 55	DOB: 07/2021	DOD: unknown	Undetermined
Age at death:	About 6 months		
Cause of death:	Undetermined		
Reason for review:	Pending child protection investigation at time of child's death; unfounded child protection investigation within one year of child's death		
Action taken:	Full investigation pending		
<p><u>Narrative:</u> Infant was reported missing in February 2022. The infant's mother had been arrested for shoplifting, refused to inform police where she lived, and did not inform police her children were home alone. Three days later, the infant's 5-year-old and 7-year-old siblings were found home alone after the 7-year-old called a relative to report they were cold and hungry. The relative went to the home to get the children but could not find the infant. The mother initially told police the infant had never existed, but police found baby items in the home and received information the mother had placed a crib and other items in a dumpster approximately 10 days earlier. The mother later made statements that the infant had died. The infant's body has not been located. The mother was charged with concealing a death and endangering the life of a child. DCFS investigated and indicated the mother for inadequate supervision and substantial risk of physical injury/environment injurious to health and welfare by neglect.</p> <p><u>Reason for Review:</u> In May 2021, a relative reported that police had responded to a motel to conduct a well-being check on the infant's then 10-year-old sister. The reporter stated the 10-year-old sister said the mother, who was seven months pregnant, hit her, but she had no visible injuries, and the reporter left the motel after tensions had calmed. The reporter returned to the motel following a second 911 call. The 10-year-old sister was crying; had scratches on her nose, cheek, arms, and hands; and stated her mother hit her and she did not want to be left alone with her mother. The reporter observed a scratch on the mother's lip, and the mother stated they had argued and wrestled. The reporter added concerns about mother's mental health. The CPI responded to the scene and met with a police officer who relayed concerns about the mother's mental state, because the mother appeared confused, suspicious, and uncooperative. The mother stated the 10-year-old did not want to go to the store with the mother and younger siblings so she allowed the 10-year-old to stay at the motel but instructed her to clean while they were gone. Upon returning the mother stated she verbally reprimanded the 10-year-old for not cleaning, and the 10-year-old physically attacked her, so she pushed and restrained the 10-year-old in self-defense. The 10-year-old stated her mother began hitting her when she refused to go to the store, and she hit her mother back, then she called her aunt after the family left for the store. The siblings reported they did not witness their mother hit the older sister and felt safe with their mother. The mother declined intact family services but agreed the 10-year-old should stay with her father, who traveled to the motel to pick her up. The younger sisters remained with the mother. In July 2021, while the previous investigation remained pending, DCFS received a report that the mother gave birth to the infant, and hospital staff were concerned that the mother was exhibiting odd behavior, appeared hostile and paranoid. Hospital staff told the CPI the mother had been appropriate with the infant, and they had no concerns about abuse or neglect. The mother stated she did not like how hospital staff had cared for the infant, so she got irritated and used unkind words. The CPI observed that the mother had a car seat and supplies for the infant. The CPI was subsequently unable to locate the mother. In October 2021, DCFS unfounded the July 2021 investigation for substantial risk of physical injury/environment injurious to health and welfare by neglect. The previous investigation remained pending in February 2022 at the time the infant was reported missing. DCFS later indicated the mother for cuts, bruises, welts, abrasions, and oral injuries by abuse; and substantial risk of physical injury/environment injurious to health and welfare by abuse.</p>			

