

OIG2023 #93

Child No. 93 DOB: 04/2018 DOD: 03/2022 Accident

Age at death: 3 years

Cause of death: Blunt force head trauma due to pedestrian struck by a semi-tractor trailer truck
Reason for review: Unfounded child protection investigation within one year of child's death

Action taken: Investigatory review of records

Narrative: Three-year-old was struck and killed by a semitruck after he left the family's apartment while in his father's care. The mother was not home at the time. The toddler was pronounced deceased at the scene. The father stated he placed the toddler on the floor in the living room, then went into his own bedroom to watch videos using headphones, and he did not hear the toddler leave. Law enforcement reported they found the main door unlocked and the father was in a room with the door mostly closed. He was unaware the toddler was gone. The father reported the toddler had a history of escaping from the home, so they installed a safety knob inside the main front door. The parents also reported the lock on the sliding porch door had been broken since they moved in, so they secured it with a rod, but law enforcement observed the rod was not in place. The father admitted to drinking one to two beers earlier in the afternoon

and there were empty beer cans in the room. DCFS investigated the toddler's death and indicated the father for death by neglect.

Reason for Review: In February 2021, law enforcement responded to a report that the family home lacked heat and hot water, the toddler slept in a car seat, and the toddler had not been bathed in a week. Law enforcement stated the home was dirty with trash piled up, the father admitted to putting the toddler to sleep in a car seat and heating the home with an electric heater. The CPI met with the family and observed the home to be warm with running water, but dirty and cluttered with beer cans in the parents' bedroom, and a broken water heater. The parents stated they heated water on the stove to bathe the toddler. The CPI determined the home needed cleaning but was safe. One week later, the CPI observed the home

to be cleaner, and the parents were scheduled to receive a new water heater that week. DCFS unfounded the investigation for environmental neglect.