

Office of the Inspector General Report to the Governor and General Assembly (Jan. 2024)

OIG2024 #110

Child No. 110	DOB: 07/2019	DOD: 10/2022	Natural
Age at death:	3 years		
Cause of death:	Bronchopneumonia of the lungs due to complications of prematurity and recent COVID 19 and RSV infections		
Reason for review:	Open intact family services case at time of child's death; indicated child protection investigation within one year of child's death		
Action taken:	Investigatory review of records		
<p><u>Narrative:</u> Three-year-old medically complex toddler was found unresponsive at 4:00am by his mother and was brought to the hospital, where he was pronounced deceased. He had a history of cardiopulmonary arrest, pulmonary hypertension, seizures, bronchopulmonary dysplasia, and respiratory failure. He required a tracheotomy and g-tube. The toddler's mother reported she checked on the toddler and left the home around 3:00am to pick someone up and another adult was in the home. Law enforcement obtained video surveillance that showed the mother left the home at 9:00pm the evening before, and phone records that showed the other adult was not in the home. The medical supply company for the toddler's concentrator machine confirmed the machine was working correctly and would have sounded alarms. The mother stated she did not ensure the machine was plugged in before she left the home. DCFS indicated the mother for death by neglect (#51), substantial risk of physical injury/environment injurious to health and welfare by neglect (#60), and inadequate supervision (#74).</p> <p>Reason for Review: In June 2022, DCFS received a report that EMS and police responded to the family home because the toddler's tracheotomy dislodged, but the mother was not home and had left the toddler in the care of his 9-year-old maternal aunt. The mother told the reporter she was home the entire time, but the 9-year-old stated the mother went to pick up the toddler's 17-month-old sister from a location 25 minutes away. The reporter stated the toddler had special medical needs, the mother was trained in his care, she successfully fixed the toddler's tracheotomy, and the toddler's breathing returned to normal. The reporter added the mother was hostile to the first responders. The toddler's maternal grandfather told the CPI he was not present for the incident, but he had been told the mother was a few doors away while the toddler's 9-year-old aunts watched him. Both of the toddler's 9-year-old aunts told the CPI no adults were in the home at the time of the incident and the mother had gone to another town to retrieve the toddler's younger sister. One of the aunts stated she watched the toddler alone for a few hours the week before, but the mother was only a few doors away and she could walk to get her if she needed anything. She stated she sought help from the neighbors to call the toddler's maternal grandfather and the neighbors called 911. The mother confirmed she left the home to pick up the toddler's younger sister, but she denied she would ever leave the toddler without adult supervision. She stated the toddler's 18-year-old maternal uncle was home at the time of the incident and she did not know why the aunts did not wake him up. The mother initially declined intact family services but later accepted services. The neighbor stated the mother's car was gone for at least 30 minutes and no adults were in the home at the time of the incident. In July 2022, DCFS indicated the mother for substantial risk of physical injury/environment injurious to health and welfare by neglect (#60), inadequate supervision (#74), and medical neglect (#79). DCFS opened a high-risk intact family services case and the intact worker recommended parenting classes, mental health assessments, and substance use assessments. The mother cooperated with the assessments and no further services were recommended. At the time of the toddler's death, the intact case remained open, and the mother was engaged in parenting classes.</p>			

