

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

OIG2024 #123

Child No. 123	DOB: 11/2010	DOD: 12/2022	Natural
Age at death:	12 years		
Cause of death:	Bacterial pneumonia; significant contributing conditions of undiagnosed severe congenital disease with severe dehydration		
Reason for review:	Unfounded child protection investigation within one year of child's death		
Action taken:	Full investigation pending		
<p><u>Narrative:</u> Twelve-year-old medically complex child was found unresponsive and not breathing at home. The mother reported her health had declined in recent weeks, and her g-tube had been leaking. The mother said she had planned to take the child to the doctor but had not yet. The parents told EMS they put purees into the child's g-tube because they could not afford her supplement after the mother's paramour began dialysis treatment. Law enforcement and DCFS investigated the child's death, and the parents did not cooperate with either agency. During forensic interviews, the other children in the home reported they were responsible for most of the child's care. The father reported he had been cut off from the children. The autopsy report noted the child died of bacterial pneumonia. DCFS obtained a second opinion from a forensic pathologist who reported the child's death was "a case of clear death by neglect." DCFS took protective custody of the child's siblings, but the court returned them to the mother's care. DCFS indicated the child's mother for death by neglect (#51) and environmental neglect (#82). The state's attorney is pursuing criminal charges.</p> <p>Reason for Review: In January 2022, DCFS received a report that the child's mother pushed the 11-year-old daughter of her paramour into a wall, causing a bruise on the hip. The CPI interviewed the children in the home, and each described the incident differently. However, both the paramour's daughter and the child's mother reported the paramour's daughter was angry, she bumped into the child's 13-year-old brother, so the child's mother bumped her in the same manner. Both denied the mother intended to hurt the paramour's daughter. The mother stated it was not the most mature way for her to handle the situation. The mother denied physical domestic incidents. The CPI also observed the child and noted it appeared her physical needs were met appropriately. The child's medical team reported no concerns. Approximately one week after the initial report, the CPI received a call that the child's 9-year-old sister disclosed a domestic violence incident between the mother and her paramour. The paramour denied any incidents of physical violence. He reported he and the mother sometimes disagreed about parenting styles, but he denied any concerns about the children's safety in her care. DCFS unfounded the investigation for substantial risk of physical injury/environment injurious to health and welfare by abuse (#10).</p>			