

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

OIG2024 #35

Child No. 35	DOB: 09/2019	DOD: 04/2023	Homicide
Age at death:	3 years		
Cause of death:	Gunshot wound to head		
Alleged perpetrator:	Unsolved		
Reason for review:	Unfounded child protection investigation within one year of child's death		
Action taken:	Investigatory review of records		
<u>Narrative:</u> Three-year-old was shot in the head while at the home of his mother's friend, and his mother brought him to the hospital. Six days later, the toddler was pronounced deceased. Police reported the mother stated two bullets came through a window, and one hit the toddler. Police observed there was no obvious damage to the windows, there was a gunshot hole in the ceiling, and there were obvious signs of attempts to clean the scene. The mother refused to speak to the CPI or police. DCFS indicated the toddler's mother for death by neglect (#51) and substantial risk of physical injury/environment injurious to health and welfare by neglect (#60).			
<u>Reason for Review:</u> In May 2022, DCFS received a report that the then 2-year-old toddler had a large burn on his arm, wrapped in a dirty paper towel. The CPI went to the home and observed the toddler walking home with his father and grandmother. The father refused to speak with the CPI and took the toddler into the home. The grandmother told the CPI the mother treated the burn at home, and the family took good care of the children. The mother spoke with the CPI outside and stated she left a hot hairstyling tool in the bathroom while she went to make the toddler a bottle, and the toddler walked into the kitchen crying and holding his arm, and she treated the toddler with first aid burn ointment. The CPI instructed the mother to take the toddler for medical treatment. The toddler's 13-year-old brother confirmed the toddler burned himself on his mother's hairstyling tool and denied any harm to himself or the toddler. The CPI observed the home was safe and adequate. The mother took the toddler to the emergency room and the treating provider told the CPI the burn was consistent with the mother's story. The toddler was scheduled for follow-up treatment with the burn unit, and medical providers in the unit informed the CPI the burn was healing appropriately, and the mother's story was consistent. The CPI observed the bathroom and completed a scene re-enactment with the mother. DCFS unfounded the investigation for burns by abuse (#5) and medical neglect (#79).			