

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

OIG2024 #45

Child No. 45	DOB: 05/2022	DOD: 07/2022	Undetermined
Age at death:	2 months		
Cause of death:	Undetermined		
Reason for review:	Child of a youth in care; two indicated and one unfounded child protection investigations within one year of child's death		
Action taken:	Investigatory review of records		
<p><u>Narrative:</u> Two-month-old was found not breathing around 8:00am. Her father began CPR and paramedics responded to a 911 call. The infant's parents reported they co-slept with the infant in an adult bed despite being advised against the practice. The 15-year-old mother's relative foster parent reported she left for work around 5:00am, she knew the mother co-slept with the infant and she was not concerned with the arrangement. Law enforcement noted the mother asked permission to bring marijuana to the hospital and smoked marijuana while law enforcement remained in the home. The parents completed toxicology screenings; the mother tested negative for all substances and the father tested positive for marijuana. DCFS investigated the infant's death and indicated her parents for death by neglect (#51).</p> <p>Reason for Review: In May 2021, DCFS received a report that the infant's maternal grandmother used cocaine and drank heavily, took the infant's then 14-year-old mother and then 12-year-old maternal aunt from a family member's home, owned a gun that she allowed the infant's mother to shoot, and there were drugs and drug paraphernalia in the home. The CPI made a good faith attempt at the home and spoke with law enforcement, who reported no knowledge of drug use in the home. The CPI located the children at the home of their paternal grandmother with whom they were living. The 14-year-old reported that her mother had come to the home intoxicated and began arguing but the teen could not recall what it was about. The mother refused to discuss the incident with the CPI but stated she wanted the teens to remain with their grandmother. DCFS unfounded the investigation against the infant's maternal grandmother for substantial risk of physical injury/environment injurious to health and welfare by neglect (#60). In June 2021, while the investigation remained pending, DCFS received a report that during a sleepover, the infant's maternal grandfather provided alcohol and drugs to a 14-year-old friend of the infant's mother and raped the friend. The friend made credible statements of abuse in a victim sensitive interview. At the hospital, the friend was found to have marijuana, cocaine, and Xanax in her system, and tested positive for chlamydia. The CPI was unable to locate the infant's maternal grandfather during the investigation. DCFS indicated the maternal grandfather for substance misuse by abuse (#15), sexually transmitted diseases (#18), and sexual penetration (#19) to the mother's friend, and substantial risk of sexual abuse (#22) to the infant's mother and 17-year-old aunt. In July 2021, DCFS received a report that the infant's maternal grandmother punched the infant's mother while intoxicated, resulting in her arrest. DCFS took protective custody of the infant's mother and aunts and placed them with a relative. The infant's mother confirmed that the infant's maternal grandmother was intoxicated and hit her, resulting in her arrest. The maternal grandmother refused to cooperate with the investigation. DCFS indicated the infant's maternal grandmother for cuts, bruises, welts, abrasions, and oral injuries by abuse (#11) and substantial risk of physical injury/environment injurious to health and welfare by neglect (#60). During the placement case, the maternal grandmother remained incarcerated and the maternal grandfather's whereabouts remained unknown. The 17-year-old aunt reported she was pregnant and due in January 2022, so the worker made a referral to Teen Parenting Service Network. The infant's mother exhibited behavioral problems at school, and the worker referred her for mental health services. In October 2021, the foster mother reported the mother was pregnant with the infant and had prenatal care scheduled. The placement worker referred the mother to Teen Parenting Service Network. The older maternal aunt gave birth to her second child, and the placement worker observed safe sleeping arrangements for both of her children. After the grandmother was released from jail, the placement worker regularly met with her and noted she appeared ambivalent to reunification and tested positive for alcohol and cocaine. In May 2022, the 15-year-old</p>			

mother gave birth to the infant. The mother completed parenting classes, and the placement worker also referred her to a DCFS educational adviser. The placement worker discussed safe sleep with the mother multiple times.