

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

OIG2024 #46

Child No. 46	DOB: 09/2013	DOD: 08/2022	Undetermined
Age at death:	8 years		
Cause of death:	Undetermined		
Reason for review:	Child welfare services referral within one year of child's death		
Action taken:	Full investigation pending		
<u>Narrative:</u> Nine-year-old medically complex child was found, by her mother, unresponsive in a bathtub, with her face submerged in water. The mother reported she left the room to retrieve a towel for the child. The child was transported by ambulance to the hospital, where she was pronounced deceased. She had been diagnosed with cerebral palsy and seizures, was non-verbal, and used a g-tube and wheelchair. DCFS indicated the child's mother for death by neglect (#51) and inadequate supervision (#74).			
<u>Reason for Review:</u> In June 2022, DCFS received a report regarding potential housing insecurity for the child's family. The child was non-verbal and required a wheelchair resulting from injuries she sustained at birth, and the hospital where the child was born had paid a settlement which went into an estate. The reporter stated the family did not pay rent for nine months, and the estate offered to pay back rent, as well as rent for the upcoming year. The landlord, though, declined the offer and stated there had been too many problems with the family and he wanted them removed from his property and filed for eviction. However, the sheriff who went to the home refused to evict the family when he saw the child's condition. The reporter stated the county authorized the bank to give the mother funds for an extended hotel stay, so the mother withdrew the funds in cash but went home to the apartment, not the hotel. The reporter cited concern for the child and her mother if they lost their housing, but reported the child had a full-time in-home nurse and there were no concerns about medical neglect. DCFS took the report for a child welfare services referral. The worker spoke with the reporter who stated the bank had not paid the rent because the mother had not provided them the address to send the payment. The reporter noted the family had moved into a hotel. The worker met with the mother, the child, the child's 4-year-old brother, and the child's nurse at the hotel. The nurse reported she cared for the child 60 hours per week and the mother was knowledgeable about and attentive to the child's needs. The mother reported the child's 12-year-old and 16-year-old siblings lived with other family members. The worker documented the child and her 4-year-old brother were safe in their mother's care. The mother stated she was open to intact family services. The worker referred the case for intact family services to assist the family with housing. In August 2022, the worker scheduled a handoff meeting for intact family services, but the child died the next day, before the handoff took place. The referral for intact family services was withdrawn following the child's death.			