

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

OIG2024 #48

Child No. 48	DOB: 09/2022	DOD: 10/2022	Undetermined
Age at death:	5 weeks		
Cause of death:	Undetermined causes		
Reason for review:	Closed intact family services case and three unfounded child protection investigations within one year of child's death		
Action taken:	Investigatory review of records		
<p><u>Narrative:</u> Five-week-old was found unresponsive by his grandmother. The grandmother reported the infant was in bed with her and the infant's three siblings. The grandmother called 911 and began CPR. The infant was transported by ambulance to the hospital, where he was pronounced deceased. The infant had a twin sibling who remained in the hospital following their birth for bradycardia. The grandmother reported she had the children overnight to give their mother a break. DCFS indicated the grandmother for death by neglect (#51).</p> <p>Reason for Review: In July 2021, DCFS opened an intact family services case for the family following an unfounded child protection investigation. The intact worker documented regular visits to the home and noted the mother complied with her services. In October 2021, DCFS received a report that the infant's mother called police for assistance when the infant's then 13-year-old sister attempted to run away from home. The next day, DCFS received a related information report that the sister was hospitalized. The sister told reporters that her mother struck her with an extension cord, but neither reporter observed any injuries. The CPI met with the sister, who reported she got into an argument with her mother, her mother struck her with an extension cord, and the sister responded by throwing objects at the mother. She added police arrived and escorted her and the mother to the hospital. The CPI met with the mother at home, who reported the sister left the home, then returned and began throwing items, and she struck the sister after the sister hit her. The infant's then 6-year-old brother reported the older sister and mother argued often. The brother and the infant's then 3-month-old and 16-month-old siblings were observed and assessed safe at home, and the CPI noted they had safe sleep arrangements. Police informed the CPI that the mother had a red face and swollen eye when they responded to the home. Ten days later, the sister was discharged from the hospital; hospital staff noted she had refused to take prescribed medication and had follow up appointments scheduled. DCFS unfounded the investigation for substantial risk of physical injury/environment injurious to health and welfare by abuse (#10). In January 2022, the intact supervisor noted the mother had not yet initiated services. That month, DCFS received a report that the infant's 13-year-old sister walked home then returned to school and stated her mother threatened to hit her if she came inside the home. The reporter stated police brought the sister to school that morning. The CPI joined the intact worker for a home visit. The mother denied the allegations. The sister denied that her mother hit her. The infant's 6-year-old brother denied the sister and mother fought. The younger children were observed free of signs of abuse or neglect. The CPI spoke to school staff, who reported no other concerns. DCFS unfounded the investigation for inadequate supervision (#74). In April 2022, DCFS received reports that the 13-year-old sister threatened her mother and other family members. Police responded to the home and transported the sister to the hospital. The sister told the CPI she ran away from home two weeks earlier and went to live with a relative. She stated her mother forced her to return home and hit her. The emergency room physician reported the sister had no physical injuries and the sister did not need hospitalization. The sister disclosed to hospital staff that she did not feel safe to return home. The CPI met with the intact worker, who reported a family member agreed to accept guardianship of the sister, and the sister agreed to participate in services. In May 2022, the intact worker completed a referral to the extended family support program to help the family with transfer of guardianship for the sister. The great aunt reported the sister did well in her care. The 6-year-old brother and younger siblings were observed free of signs of abuse or neglect and the brother reported he felt safe at home. That month, DCFS unfounded the investigation for substantial risk of physical injury/environment injurious to health and welfare by abuse</p>			

(#10). In July 2022, two months before the infant's birth, the intact case closed as a voluntary withdrawal.