

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

OIG2024 #53

Child No. 53	DOB: 10/2022	DOD: 01/2023	Undetermined
Age at death:	3 months		
Cause of death:	Undetermined		
Reason for review:	Pending child protection investigation at time of child’s death; unfounded child protection investigation within one year of child’s death		
Action taken:	Investigatory review of records		
<p><u>Narrative:</u> Three-month-old was found unresponsive after a nap. His father began CPR while his mother called 911. The infant was transported to the hospital by ambulance, where he was pronounced deceased. The parents reported they fed the infant, then placed him down for a nap on an adult bed, face up, with a pillow to prop him up and a blanket, and they checked on him a few times. Following the infant’s death, the mother went to live with the maternal grandfather out of state. She did not cooperate with the DCFS investigation of the death. The infant’s pediatrician reported that the infant had missed appointments with the pediatrician and three other specialists. The infant had not been seen by a doctor since being discharged from the hospital after birth. The infant’s cause of death was undetermined at autopsy, and the medical examiner wrote in the autopsy report, “It is unknown if asphyxia due to unsafe sleep environment contributed to death. Also, molecular genetic testing for cardiac disease was not within the scope of the diagnostic workup and a spontaneous cardiac dysrhythmia cannot be ruled out.” DCFS unfounded the mother for death by neglect (#51) but indicated the mother for substantial risk of physical injury/environment injurious to health and welfare by neglect (#60).</p>			
<p><u>Reason for Review:</u> In July 2022, DCFS received a report that the infant’s then 16-year-old mother was pregnant with the infant, the father was a 26-year-old man, and the mother’s family was not concerned about the relationship. The reporter was also concerned about the potential for human trafficking of the mother and her 18-year-old sister. The mother and her parents confirmed that the mother was in a relationship with a 26-year-old man. The parents said they initially did not like it, but the mother continued to see him. In October 2022, while the investigation remained pending, the infant was born and remained in the NICU for one month. In November 2022, DCFS received related information that the infant was ready to be discharged but the mother had told the reporter that she did not have custody of her 2-year-old toddler. The mother reported that the infant’s maternal grandfather was living out of state and was raising the 2-year-old toddler so the mother could focus on school. The mother planned to live with the infant’s maternal great-grandmother for help caring for the infant while she continued school. In November 2022, DCFS unfounded the investigation against the maternal grandparents for inadequate supervision (#74). In December 2022, DCFS received a report that the 17-year-old mother left the then 2-month-old infant with people who had COVID-19 so she could attend a concert, the mother had not brought the infant to the doctor for a vision condition that could result in blindness if left untreated, and the infant had diaper rash because mother did not change his diaper overnight. The next day, DCFS received additional information that the infant he had missed two appointments and had not been seen since he was discharged from the hospital. The CPI spoke with the infant’s treating physician at the hospital who stated the missed appointments constituted medical neglect. The CPI located the mother and the infant at the maternal grandmother’s home. The mother reported she missed appointments because the doctor was too far away, and another provider canceled her appointment because they didn’t take her insurance. She had been given the name of a clinic that was closer to her and had set up an appointment at that clinic. She reported she took the infant to the emergency room and the infant was diagnosed with eczema and she was given cream to treat it. The mother reported she did leave the infant with relatives to attend a concert but denied that the relatives had COVID-19. The CPI spoke with the maternal grandfather, who reported that he had guardianship of the mother’s older child and tried to assist the mother with the infant when he could. He lived in a neighboring state but planned to visit the mother and the infant. When the grandfather visited the mother, he, and the infant met with the CPI at the DCFS office. The mother and grandfather reported that</p>			

the mother was going to give the grandfather short term guardianship of the infant. Later that night, the infant died. DCFS later indicated the investigation for medical neglect (#79).