

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

OIG2024 #86

Child No. 86	DOB: 08/2022	DOD: 01/2023	Accident
Age at death:	5 months		
Cause of death:	Suffocation with plastic bag over the face		
Reason for review:	Pending child protection investigation at time of child's death		
Action taken:	Investigatory review of records		
<b><u>Narrative:</u></b> Five-month-old was found unresponsive by his mother, with a plastic bag across his face. The mother began CPR and one of the infant's siblings called 911. Medical staff reported the infant was deceased upon arrival at the hospital. The mother reported she had been co-sleeping with the infant who had been propped up on a pillow. First responders noted the home was cluttered and unkempt. The mother told the CPI she regularly co-slept with the infant, and sometimes placed pillows between herself and the infant. She stated she usually cleaned up items on the bed before going to sleep, but she was very tired that night and did not do so. During a home visit, the infant's four siblings, between the ages of 5 and 13 years old, reported they felt safe at home and appeared free of signs of abuse or neglect. The CPI noted the home appeared clean but cluttered, and there were many people living in a small space. DCFS indicated the infant's mother for death by neglect (#51).			
<b><u>Reason for Review:</u></b> In December 2022, DCFS received a report that the infant's 13-year-old sister and two non-related 13-year-old females disclosed a doctor inappropriately touched each of them during medical exams they completed upon inpatient admission to a hospital. Hospital staff reported they alerted the patients' parents, conducted an internal investigation, and placed the doctor's contract on hold. A nurse who was present for the exam of the infant's sister stated she did not witness any inappropriate actions by the doctor. The CPI attempted to see the sister and another patient at the hospital but learned they had been discharged. In January 2023, the CPI met with the sister at school and noted no signs of abuse or neglect. The mother told the CPI the sister disclosed she felt uncomfortable after the exam, and the mother attempted to speak with the doctor but was not allowed to. The mother agreed to a forensic interview for the sister. Three days later, while the investigation remained pending, the infant died. Following the infant's death, the sister did not attend the forensic interview and the CPI was unable to locate the family. The doctor told the CPI that he believed the allegations stemmed from a portion of the exam when he checked the pelvic pulse below the naval. He denied any wrongdoing or sexual intent in the exams. The doctor also provided the CPI a written explanation of his medical exam process and reasoning for the need to touch the lower abdomen on each patient. He also noted he had been practicing medicine for over 30 years without prior complaints. One of the other patients completed a forensic interview and did not make any disclosures of sexual molestation by the doctor. Police closed the criminal investigation with no charges. In July 2023, DCFS unfounded the investigation for sexual molestation (#21).			