

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

OIG2024 #96

Child No. 96	DOB: 07/2022	DOD: 04/2023	Accident
Age at death:	9 months		
Cause of death:	Drowning		
Reason for review:	Open intact family services case at time of child's death; three unfounded child protection investigations within one year of child's death		
Action taken:	Investigatory review of records		
<p><b><u>Narrative:</u></b> Nine-month-old was found submerged in the bath. The mother had asked the children to clean the house, and the 9-year-old brother stated he thought the infant needed a bath, so he placed her in the bathtub, left the room to take out the garbage, and asked his 4-year-old and 6-year-old siblings to watch the infant. When the 9-year-old brother returned, he found the infant under the water. The mother removed the infant from the bath and called 911, and paramedics transported the infant to the hospital by ambulance. DCFS took protective custody of the infant's three siblings. A child protection investigation of the child's death remains pending.</p> <p><b>Reason for Review:</b> In May 2022, DCFS received a report that the mother punched the infant's then 5-year-old brother in the head because he did not want to ride the school bus. The brother denied anyone hit him at the bus stop. School staff denied he had disclosed an incident and denied any prior concerns with the family. The maternal relatives he lived with also denied any physical abuse. In August 2022, while the investigation remained pending, DCFS received a report that the mother's home had cockroach and rat infestations; the mother was a sex worker; and the mother left the children, who were then 4 weeks, 3 years, 5 years, and 9 years old, unsupervised at home while she worked. The reporter also noted concerns about domestic violence, drug sales, a firearm, and lack of food, and hot water in the home. During a home visit, the CPI noted the home lacked hot water but had working electricity. The mother denied the allegations and stated the rats and roaches "came with the apartment." The landlord reported the infestations were due to the home being dirty, but he was unaware of the lack of hot water and stated he would have that fixed. The mother agreed to intact family services. Later that month, DCFS unfounded the May 2022 investigation for substantial risk of physical injury/environment injurious to health and welfare by abuse (#10). In October 2022, DCFS opened an intact family services case. The CPI on the second investigation noted there was a gun in the home that was locked, and the home had food, hot water, and gas. That month, DCFS unfounded the August 2022 investigation for substantial risk of physical injury/environment injurious to health and welfare by neglect (#60), inadequate supervision (#74), and environmental neglect (#82). The intact worker visited the home regularly. The mother agreed to participate in parenting classes and individual therapy but did not engage in services. In January 2023, while the intact case remained open, DCFS received a report that the mother had a history of not picking up the children from school on time, so the school had to deny the 9-year-old brother from participation in afterschool programs, and the mother had physically threatened school personnel. The mother denied the allegations. She stated the school did not inform her the brother was removed from his afterschool program, and school personnel had called her names. The infant's father also reported the school had not informed them the brother was removed from the afterschool program. Before the investigation closed, the school informed the CPI there had been no additional concerns since the initial incident. DCFS unfounded the investigation for inadequate supervision (#74). The intact case remained open at the time of the infant's death, and the intact worker noted the mother had not engaged in parenting classes and counseling services.</p>			

