

Indiana: 2024 Annual Report of Child Abuse & Neglect Fatalities in Indiana

The Annual Report of Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities in Indiana is the state's official record of child deaths determined by the Indiana Department of Child Services to have been caused by caregiver maltreatment or neglect.

Victim: 5-year-old girl

DCS involvement at time of fatal event: No open DCS involvement

Number of previous unsubstantiated assessments for victim: 5

Number of previous substantiated assessments for victim: 1

Screened-out reports: 0

Perpetrator: Stepmother

Perpetrator history of substantiated assessments: 0

Criminal charges: Yes

Circumstances: A 5-year-old girl died from drowning. She lived with her father, stepmother and siblings, and custody was shared with the mother. On the day of the fatality, the child was in the care of the stepmother while the father was at work. The stepmother took the child and siblings to a river to swim. At some point, she realized she could not find the child. 911 was contacted, and the child was later recovered from the river. The stepmother provided inconsistent statements as to what occurred prior to her realizing the child was missing. The stepmother's behavior was erratic, she smelled of alcohol and her blood alcohol content was 0.199. The stepmother submitted to a drug screen and was positive for THC.