Indiana: 2023 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: 2-year-old boy

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

Number of previous unsubstantiated assessments for victim: 1

Number of previous substantiated assessments for victim: 0

Perpetrator: Grandmother

Perpetrator history of substantiated assessments: 0

Circumstances: A 2-year-old boy died from acute fentanyl intoxication. He lived with his grandparents and other extended family members. The grandparents had legal guardianship of the child due to the mother passing away of a fentanyl overdose several months prior. On the day of the fatality, the child and grandmother went to sleep together in an adult bed in the early morning hours. Shortly after that, the grandfather went to work, and the child was still sleeping. Approximately seven hours later, the grandmother woke up and found the child deceased. The grandmother completed a drug screen and was positive for methamphetamine, THC and benzodiazepines. Upon a search of the home, law enforcement found the grandmother's purse, which had been in the proximity of the child when the child went to sleep, containing several illicit substances, as well as fentanyl testing strips. At autopsy, the child's toxicology was positive for fentanyl and norfentanyl.