Child Fatality Report Release of Information to the Public

Person ID: 101051542

County of Child's Residence: FORT BEND

Gender: Male

Age: 17 Year(s) 6 Month(s)

Date of Death: 08/24/2023

On the date of the fatality, the child was not in DFPS conservatorship and was living with the child's parent, a managing conservator, a legal guardian or other person entititled to the child's possession.

Child's Name: Williams,Joseph

Current Report(s) of Abuse/Neglect:

Intake Date(s): 08/24/2023

Summary of Allegation(s)/Investigation:

The Department received a report notifying it of a fatal event after law enforcement responded to a young child being found wandering outside the home. Law enforcement was knocking on doors in an attempt to locate the child's caregiver and discovered the deceased child in the home. The deceased child had been shot multiple times and a relative was arrested. The young child found outside the home was transported to a local hospital for treatment.

The Department's investigation determined that the deceased child, age 17, resided with his adult sibling, adult nephew, the nephew's paramour, and their one-year-old child (great-nephew to the deceased child). The deceased child was diagnosed with Downs Syndrome and had been in the care of his sibling due to their mother's health issues. The child arrived home from school while his sibling was at work and his nephew was responsible for his care. The nephew's paramour was not present in the home at the time however the great-nephew was. It was unknown what triggered the nephew to physically assault and fatally shoot the deceased child. After the child was fatally shot, his nephew left the home leaving the great-nephew home alone with the deceased child. Law enforcement was patrolling the area when they observed an altercation between the nephew and an unrelated neighbor. The nephew was detained and another responding officer found the great-nephew outside the home with injuries to his arm. Law enforcement found the front door of the home was opened and entered in an attempt to locate a caregiver for the great-nephew. The officer discovered the deceased child in his bedroom with multiple

gunshot wounds and lacerations to his body. The nephew admitted that he was responsible for the child's fatal injuries and claimed he heard voices telling him that the child was summoning demons. He was holding his one-year-old son when he was assaulting the deceased child and the one-year-old was injured during the assault. The deceased child's sibling and the nephew's paramour recalled how the nephew had been engaging in bizarre behaviors in the days leading up to the shooting. However, they were not aware of the nephew having any mental health issues prior to the shooting. The nephew's paramour and the great-nephew moved out of the home and no longer had contact with the nephew. There were no other minor children in the sibling and nephew's home.

The medical examiner completed the autopsy, but the final report was not available when the Department completed its investigation. The preliminary report indicates the cause of death as multiple gun shot wounds and manner of death as homicide.

Law enforcement conducted an investigation and the nephew was arrested and charged with murder of the deceased child.

Investigation Findings:

The Department confirmed that the deceased child's adult nephew committed Physical Abuse of the deceased child, which led to the child's death.

The Department administratively closed the concerns of Neglectful Supervision of the one-year-old great-nephew by the nephew as those were addressed in a companion case.

Safety and Risk Assessment Factors Identified:
A Safety and Risk Assessment were not required in this investigation as the only child in the household died.

Safety and Risk Assessment Factors Identified:

Case Action:

Only child died

Services and Referrals Provided to the Family:

Counseling and Evaluation

Other Services:

The family accepted the grief counseling resources that were offered to them.

No Service Referrals and deceased child was an only child.

Other Actions Taken to Mitigate Risk:

If one or more children were previously removed from the home, for each conservatorship episode, summarize dates of conservatorship and type of placement at the end of conservatorship:

Previous Report of Abuse/Neglect:

Intake Date(s): 12/10/2022

Summary of Previous Allegation(s)/Investigation:

The Department received a report notifying it of concerns after the deceased child was found walking by himself alongside a busy street. The child was picked up by law enforcement and spent approximately an hour and a half trying to locate the child's residence. The child's adult nephew was walking outside of the home looking for the child. The family did not contact law enforcement when the child was missing. The nephew claimed he fell asleep and the child left the home and traveled a mile away from the home.

The Department's investigation determined the deceased child resided with his adult sibling. The sibling had left the child in the care of the adult nephew when the child left the home. The child was located by law enforcement after an hour and brought back home. The sibling was not aware that the child had left the residence and had taken the necessary safety measures to prevent the child from leaving the home without an adult. The child is diagnosed with Downs Syndrome and did not have the capacity to understand the dangers of leaving the home. He was not injured and all of his basic needs were being adequately addressed by his sibling. The child's nephew was reportedly visiting and was not available to provide information that led to the child leaving the home. The child remained safe in the care of his adult sibling. Law enforcement did not pursue any charges and closed their case.

Investigation Findings:

The Department was unable to confirm that the deceased child's nephew committed Neglectful Supervision of the deceased child.

Safety and Risk Assessment Factors Identified:
12/15/2023: Safety Assessment - Initial: Safe
Risk Assessment: Final Risk Level - Moderate

Safety and Risk Assessment Factors Identified:

Case Action:

Close

Services and Referrals Provided to the Family:

Other Services:

The sibling accepted the community resources offered to him.

Other Actions Taken to Mitigate Risk:

The deceased child remained in the care of the adult sibling and his nephew was not a caregiver.

Other Previous Report of Abuse/Neglect:

Intake Date(s): 03/26/2020

Summary of Previous Allegation(s)/Investigation:

The Department received a report notifying it of concerns that the deceased child had been found walking to a gas station at 7:00am. The child was non-verbal and law enforcement was contacted. The child's sister-in-law showed up to retrieve the child and then his adult sibling showed up to pick him up. The child had not been injured as a result of the incident.

The Department's Alternative Response investigation determined the deceased child was diagnosed with Downs Syndrome and was non-verbal. He resided with his adult sibling and sibling's wife as a result of his mother's health issues. The child had left his sibling's home and was observed walking the street alone by a bystander who followed him to a convenience store and contacted law enforcement. The sibling and his wife were unaware that the child had left the home. The sibling added safety locks to the doors to prevent the child from being able to leave the home without their knowledge. They agreed to secure a tracker and medical bracelet for the child as additional safety measures to help keep the child safe. The child's basic needs were being adequately addressed by the sibling. The child remained in the care of his sibling and no additional services were offered. Law enforcement was not pursuing a criminal investigation and closed their case.

Investigation Findings:

The Department closed the Alternate Response case with no danger indicators. The child was safe and the sibling agreed to install additional safety locks in the home.

Safety and Risk Assessment Factors Identified:

Risk Assessment: Safety and Risk Factors Identified:
03/31/2023: Safety Assessment - Initial: Safe
Risk Assessment: Final Risk Level: Moderate

Case Action:

Close

Services and Referrals Provided to the Family:

The sibling agreed to install additional safety locks in the home and no additional services were needed.

Other Services:

Other Actions Taken to Mitigate Risk:

The sibling caregiver agreed to install the additional safety locks on the door to help keep the child from leaving the home without their knowledge.

Note: This report was prepared on 06/24/2024 and does not include corrections or updates, if any, that may be subsequently made to DFPS data on or after the date this report was prepared.