Child Fatality Report Release of Information to the Public

Person ID: 82849349

County of Child's Residence: CASS

Gender: Female

Age: 8 Year(s) 7 Month(s)

Date of Death: 07/29/2022

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: Hughes,A'Myiah L

Current Report(s) of Abuse/Neglect:

Intake Date(s): 07/30/2022

Summary of Allegation(s)/Investigation:

The Department received a report after the deceased child and two siblings were found dead in a pond near their residence. The children had been reported missing. Law enforcement and others were searching for the children when they were found in the pond.

The Department's investigation determined the deceased child and five siblings were left in the care of a family member of the deceased child when the mother of the deceased child went to work. The child suffered physical injuries and died while in the care of the family member. The mother was aware of the family member's history of substance abuse and violence behavior but continued to use the family member as a babysitter when she was working.

The medical examiner conducted an autopsy, but the final cause and matter of death was not available when the Department's investigation closed. The preliminary findings indicate the cause of death will be homicide violence including drowning and the manner of death will be homicide.

Law enforcement is continuing their investigation, but no charges had been filed when the Department's investigation closed.

Investigation Findings:

The Department confirmed allegations the deceased child's family member committed physical abuse of the deceased child which led to the child's death. The autopsy showed the child had significant injuries and was drowned.

The Department confirmed allegations the deceased child's family member committed sexual abuse of the deceased child. The autopsy showed the child had injuries to her vagina.

The Department confirmed allegations the deceased child's family member committed neglectful supervision of the deceased child. The family member was the only caregiver for the child when she was reported missing.

The Department confirmed allegations the deceased child's mother committed neglectful supervision of the deceased child. The mother was aware of the family member's criminal background which included possession of an illegal substance and other crimes. She was also aware of the family member's incarceration, but allowed the family member to babysit her six children regularly.

The Department did not confirm allegations the deceased child's mother committed physical neglect of the deceased child. The family relocated to a different location as their home was considered a crime scene. The Department was unable to access the family's home for safety.

Safety and Risk Assessment Factors Identified:

Structured Decision Making Safety Assessments:
1.) 07/31/2022: Safety Assessment - Initial: Safe
2.) 07/31/2022: Safety Assessment - Reassessment: Safe with plan
3.) 10/03/2022: Safety Assessment - Reassessment: Safe

Risk Assessment Final Risk Level: High

Case Action:

Family Preservation

Services and Referrals Provided to the Family:

Other Services:

he court ordered the mother to participate in the Family Preservation stage and the mother agreed to follow the orders.

Other Actions Taken to Mitigate Risk:

The mother and surviving siblings moved in with the deceased child's maternal grandfather. The mother is not allowing any contact with the family member.

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:

05/10/2017 - 05/11/2017 (3 siblings) - case was non-suited - ending placement with mother
05/10/2017 - 11/03/2017 (1 sibling) - ending placement with mother
05/26/2017 - 11/03/2017 (3 siblings) - ending placement with mother

Previous Report of Abuse/Neglect:

Intake Date(s): 11/20/2016

Summary of Previous Allegation(s)/Investigation:

The Department received a report the home, where the deceased child lives with the deceased child's mother, grandmother, siblings and cousins, is unsafe and there is inedible food, dirt and junk everywhere.

The Department's investigation determined the home had some clutter and trash, but the conditions were not unsanitary. There were groceries in the kitchen for the family. The school age children made no outcry of abuse or neglect. There was an open Family Preservation stage of service, and the caseworker had no concerns for the children's welfare.

Investigation Findings:

The Department did not confirm allegations the deceased child's mother committed Physical Neglect of the deceased child. The home was not unsanitary, and the children had food and clothing.

Safety and Risk Assessment Factors Identified:

Case Action:

Services and Referrals Provided to the Family:

Other Services:

Referred the mother to resources which provide car seats and she agreed to contact the resources.

Other Actions Taken to Mitigate Risk:

There was an open Family Preservation case when this investigation was initiated and remained open with the investigation closed. The family continued to receive services through the Family Preservation stage.

Previous Report of Abuse/Neglect:

Intake Date(s): 04/05/2013

Summary of Previous Allegation(s)/Investigation:

The Department received a report the deceased child's mother delayed medical attention for the deceased child. The child was admitted to the hospital for an abscess to the right buttock, a fever of 103 degrees, a urinary tract infection, additional abscesses and possible MSRA infection.

The Department's investigation determined three days earlier the mother had sought care at a different hospital where the child was accessed and discharged. The home environment was clean with adequate food and clothing.

Investigation Findings:

The Department did not confirm the deceased child's mother committed medical and physical neglect of the deceased child. The mother had sought care three days before but the child was not adequately treated. When the child's wound did not heal, the mother sought medical care again at a different hospital.

Safety and Risk Assessment Factors Identified:

Case Action:

Services and Referrals Provided to the Family:

Other Services:

NA

Other Actions Taken to Mitigate Risk:

Home Health Care services were arranged by the hospital, and they remained involved until the wound healed. The home health nursing staff had no concerns for the home environment or the mother's care of the children.

Previous Report of Abuse/Neglect:

Intake Date(s): 03/24/2014

Summary of Previous Allegation(s)/Investigation:

The Department received a report the deceased child had two burn marks on the left hand when the child returned from the deceased child's father's home. The deceased child's mother called the father who confirmed the child had touched the stove top while he was holding the child.

The Department's investigation determined the child was clean and appears healthy when she was seen at the mother's home. There were no marks on the child's hand, but she did have two marks on her forehead of unknown origin. The marks were healing and there is no indication of abuse.

Investigation Findings:

The Department did not confirm the deceased child's father committed neglectful supervision of the deceased child. The investigator did not observe any marks or bruises on the child's hand.

Safety and Risk Assessment Factors Identified:

Structured Decision Making Safety Assessments:
1.) 08/05/2015: Safety Assessment - Initial: Safe

Risk Assessment Final Risk Level: Risk Assessment not required by Policy.

Case Action:

Services and Referrals Provided to the Family:

Other Services:

none

Other Actions Taken to Mitigate Risk:

none

Previous Report of Abuse/Neglect:

Intake Date(s): 05/22/2014; 06/10/2014

Summary of Previous Allegation(s)/Investigation:

The Department received a report on 05/22/2014 the deceased child and siblings are living at an unsafe location where there is drug activity. Empty vials of PCP and a grinder used to grind marijuana were observed. Another report was received on 06/10/2014 the children were living with the deceased child's grandmother without working utilities or food. The grandmother is disabled.

The Department's investigation determined the mother and the grandmother have pooled their resources and the home the family lives in has working utilities. It appears the rental company rented the family a home before it was ready to be lived in and the electricity could not be turned on until repairs were made. This has been resolved. The mother and the grandmother completed a drug test and was negative. No concerns were noted regarding the children.

Investigation Findings:

The Department did not confirm the deceased child's mother committed neglectful supervision of the deceased child. The family's home is safe and appropriate. The mother tested negative for drugs.

Safety and Risk Assessment Factors Identified:

Structured Decision Making Safety Assessments:
1.) 07/15/2016: Safety Assessment - Initial: Safe with plan
2.) 07/21/2016: Safety Assessment - Reassessment: Safe with plan

Risk Assessment Final Risk Level: High

Case Action:

Services and Referrals Provided to the Family:

Other Services:

NA

Other Actions Taken to Mitigate Risk:

The family is able to access community resources and services to meet the needs of the children.

Previous Report of Abuse/Neglect:

Intake Date(s): 08/04/2015

Summary of Previous Allegation(s)/Investigation:

The Department received a report the deceased child's grandmother only feeds the deceased child and sibling one time a day resulting in weight loss. The grandmother drinks alcohol and takes prescription pills to the point of intoxication daily. The grandmother drives with the children in the car while she is intoxicated. The grandmother hit the children with a plastic coat hanger for getting water on the floor after taking a bath.

The Department's investigation determined the grandmother takes prescription medication for her diabetes and seizures. The grandmother denied drinking alcohol and the children appeared to be healthy with no marks or bruises observed. The deceased child's mother allows the children to stay with the grandmother.

Investigation Findings:

The Department did not confirm the deceased child's grandmother committed neglectful supervision or physical abuse of the deceased child. The grandmother takes prescription medication for her health diagnoses, the home meets the children's needs and there is no indication of abuse or neglect of the children.

Safety and Risk Assessment Factors Identified:

Structured Decision Making Safety Assessments:
1.) 11/22/2016: Safety Assessment - Initial: Safe

Risk Assessment Final Risk Level: High

Case Action:

Services and Referrals Provided to the Family:

Other Services:

none

Other Actions Taken to Mitigate Risk:

none

Previous Report of Abuse/Neglect:

Intake Date(s): 03/14/2017

Summary of Previous Allegation(s)/Investigation:

The Department received a report a family member of the deceased child came to the home where the deceased child lived with the deceased child's mother and siblings. The deceased child's cousin was visiting the mother's home. The family member threatened to shoot-up the mother's home if the cousin did not come out of the home. The family member has shot at the cousin in the past and has multiple loaded weapons in his possession.

The Department's investigation determined the family member did not shoot at the mother's home. There is an on-going family feud between the family members. While the family member may have threatened to shoot up

the house, there is no evidence he shot at the home or family.

Investigation Findings:

The Department did not confirm allegations the deceased child's family member committed physical abuse of the deceased child. Through he made threats, there is no evidence he fired the gun.

Safety and Risk Assessment Factors Identified:

Structured Decision Making Safety Assessments:
1.) 03/15/2017: Safety Assessment - Initial: Safe

Risk Assessment Final Risk Level: High

Case Action:

Services and Referrals Provided to the Family:

Other Services:

none

Other Actions Taken to Mitigate Risk:

There was an open Family Preservation case when this investigation was initiated. The family continued to receive services through the Department.

Conservatorship worked with the family from 05/10/2017 till 11/08/2017. The mother participated in counseling, parenting, doctor's appointments and random drug testing. The children were returned to her care

Previous Report of Abuse/Neglect:

Intake Date(s): 03/09/2018; 04/03/2018

Summary of Previous Allegation(s)/Investigation:

The Department received a report on 03/09/2018 when the deceased child's sibling was seen with a bruise under her right eye. The sibling indicated the bruise was happened when the deceased child's mother spanked her with a switch. There are concerns the deceased child and sibling are not getting enough food at home, smells, comes to school dirty, and the child's clothes do not fit. There is also concern the family does not have running water.

The Department received another report on 04/03/2018 when the deceased child and her sibling said the deceased child's grandmother hits them. The grandmother may have mental health diagnoses. Other concerns include a lack of food in the home and the children not having clothing and shoes.

The Department's investigation determined the bruise under the child's right eye was from the deceased child's younger sibling scratching the child. No other bruising was observed on the child or siblings when they were seen throughout the case. The family's home had working utilities and food in the home. There were lots of clothes in the children's bedroom.

Investigation Findings:

The Department did not confirm the allegation of Physical Abuse of the deceased child by the deceased child's mother or grandmother. The bruise to the child's eye was determined to be from a younger sibling and no other bruises or fresh marks were observed.

The Department did not confirm the allegation of Physical Neglect of the deceased child by the deceased child's mother. The family's home was found to have working utilities, food and clothing for the child.

Safety and Risk Assessment Factors Identified:

Structured Decision Making Safety Assessments:
1.) 03/10/2018: Safety Assessment - Initial: Safe

Risk Assessment Final Risk Level: High

Case Action:

Services and Referrals Provided to the Family:

Other Services:

The mother was provided with homemaker and preventative resources to help the family, but the mother declined.

Other Actions Taken to Mitigate Risk:

A Family Team Meeting was held during the investigation with the family's support system.

Previous Report of Abuse/Neglect:

Intake Date(s): 10/30/2019; 12/04/2019

Summary of Previous Allegation(s)/Investigation:

The Department received a report the deceased child's sibling was severely underweight. Another report was received the deceased child's mother was no following through with mental health treatment for the deceased child.

The Department's investigation determined the mother followed through with appointments for both children. She also sought help through the local mental health authority for the child.

Investigation Findings:

The Department did not confirm allegations the deceased child's mother committed medical neglect of the deceased child. The mother ensured mental health appointments were kept for the child

Safety and Risk Assessment Factors Identified:

Structured Decision Making Safety Assessments:
1.) 11/01/2019: Safety Assessment - Initial: Safe
2.) 01/10/2020: Safety Assessment - Case Closure: Safe

Risk Assessment Final Risk Level: High

Case Action:

Services and Referrals Provided to the Family:

Household items and food were offered by the Department and accepted by the mother.

Other Services:

Family Preservation was offered and accepted by the mother

Other Actions Taken to Mitigate Risk:

During the Family Preservation stage the family the agency assisted the family with finding appropriate services to treat the deceased child's mental health.

Other Previous Report of Abuse/Neglect:

Intake Date(s): 12/12/2017

Summary of Previous Allegation(s)/Investigation:

The Department received a report the deceased child and sibling always eats everything on their tray at school and asks for seconds. They seem hungry all the time. The children wear dirty clothes and do not appear to have warm clothes for the cold weather days.

The Department's investigation determined the family's home has working utilities and plenty of food. The children have warm clothes to wear.

Investigation Findings:

The Department did not confirm allegations the deceased child's mother committed physical neglect of the deceased child. No safety concerns found during a home visit and the mother is meeting the needs of the child.

Safety and Risk Assessment Factors Identified:

Risk Assessment: 1.) 10/19/2018: Safety Assessment - Initial: Safe
2.) 12/19/2018: Safety Assessment - Case Closure: Safe

Risk Assessment Final Risk Level: High

Case Action:

Services and Referrals Provided to the Family:

Household items and food were offered by the Department and accepted by the mother.

Other Services:

none

Other Actions Taken to Mitigate Risk:

There is supportive family in the area and the older children attend school.

Note: This report was prepared on 03/02/2023 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.