Child Fatality Report Release of Information to the Public

Person ID: 97980286

County of Child's Residence: RANDALL

Gender: Male

Age: 4 Year(s) 8 Month(s)

Date of Death: 08/06/2022

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: Grist,Wesson

Current Report(s) of Abuse/Neglect:

Intake Date(s): 08/06/2022, 08/07/2022, 08/08/2022, 08/09/2022

Summary of Allegation(s)/Investigation:

The Department received seven reports from 08/06/2022 through 08/09/2022. All of these reports were merged into a single investigation. It was reported that the deceased child was autistic and had significant medical issues due to a chromosomal abnormality which caused him to be non-verbal. He was found unresponsive in his home and was observed to have extensive bruising, abrasions and lacerations all over his body. It was reported that these injuries were highly concerning for physical abuse. The home was also reported to be dirty with trash and cat urine. Deceased child was not able to be revived by first responders and was pronounced deceased.

The Department's investigation determined that the deceased child and his sibling had been home for a couple of hours with mother's paramour while deceased child's mother was running some errands. The deceased child's other sibling was at a relative's home. The paramour reported that deceased child vomited after mother left so he was given a bath and put back in his bed. When deceased child's mother got home, she discovered deceased child was non-responsive in his bed. 911 was called and mother reported they started doing chest compressions.

A preliminary autopsy was completed which detailed concerns as to the multiple non-fatal marks, bruises and lacerations seen on the deceased child. The medical examiner determined deceased child had a large, unexplained laceration to his liver. When the final autopsy results were received, the medical examiner determined that the

deceased child died as a result of an intentional crushing type trauma to his liver causing significant blood loss which was fatal and caused his death. There were old and new injuries that were consistent with physical abuse on the child's head, face, right ear, neck, abdomen, arms, legs, bottom, and back.

The deceased child's liver laceration was the injury that caused immediate onset of symptoms. The Department determined that mother's paramour who was the caregiver at the time was responsible for the injury. However, do to the numerous old and new injuries on the deceased child, the mother had to be aware her child was being harmed.

The deceased child's mother retained an attorney and was marginally cooperative with the Department and allowed limited access to her home and the surviving siblings. The Department learned that the paramour left the home and moved to Florida after the start of the investigation. The mother stated that she had ended her relationship with her paramour. The surviving children were healthy, unharmed and remained in the care of their mother as the Department did not have the authority to remove them.

The Department conducted a joint investigation with law enforcement. At case closure, the criminal case remained ongoing with the focus of the case on mother's paramour, no formal charges had been filed.

Investigation Findings:

The Department confirmed that the deceased child's mother's paramour committed Physical Abuse of the deceased child and that this abuse led to the child's death. The paramour was the only caregiver and was alone with the child when the fatal liver laceration occurred.

The Department confirmed that the deceased child's mother was responsible for Physical Abuse of the deceased child. There were numerous old and new injuries seen on the child and documented by the child's autopsy. It was determined that the mother had to have known that her child was being harmed and she failed to act in a protective manner.

The Department did not confirm that the mother or her paramour were responsible for Neglectful Supervision and Physical Neglect of the deceased child and the deceased child's two siblings. There was a caregiver for the children and the neglectful supervision concerns were more consistent with physical abuse. The home was found to be dirty but was not a health hazard to the children.

Safety and Risk Assessment Factors Identified:

Structured Decision Making Safety Assessments:
1.) 08/07/2022: Safety Assessment - Initial: Safe
2.) 10/27/2022: Safety Assessment - Reassessment: Safe with plan
3.) 11/23/2022: Safety Assessment - Case Closure: Safe with plan
4.) 11/23/2022: Safety Assessment - Case Closure: Unsafe

Risk Assessment Final Risk Level: Very High

Case Action:

Fam refusal/No legal interven poss-Close

Services and Referrals Provided to the Family:

Counseling and Evaluation

Other Services:

n/a

Other Actions Taken to Mitigate Risk:

n/a

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:

n/a

Previous Report of Abuse/Neglect:

Intake Date(s): 03/30/2019

Summary of Previous Allegation(s)/Investigation:

The Department received a report that the deceased child's mother left the deceased child and his sibling alone and sleeping in an unattended vehicle while she was in a store with the oldest sibling. The mother minimized concerns saying she did not want to get the children out in the cold weather as they had not been feeling well. Law enforcement responded and addressed concerns with the mother.

The Department's investigation determined that the mother did leave the two children in the car. It was determined that this was an isolated event. The deceased child was noted to have medical issues including seizures but the mother was meeting the child's needs. The deceased child's siblings did not have any special needs. Medical collaterals to include Early Childhood Intervention were contacted as collaterals. The collaterals reported no concerns as to the care of the mother's care of her children, including no concerns with the mother's care of the deceased child.

Deceased child's father was contacted and while he was divorced from the mother, he denied having any concerns of her care of the children.

Investigation Findings:

The Department was unable to confirm that the deceased child's mother committed neglectful supervision of the deceased child and his sibling that were left in the car. While it was confirmed the mother did leave the children alone, sleeping in the car, it was felt this was an isolated incident and the mother did not intentionally place her children in harm's way.

Safety and Risk Assessment Factors Identified:

Structured Decision Making Safety Assessments:
1.) 04/02/2019: Safety Assessment - Initial: Safe
2.) 04/26/2019: Safety Assessment - Case Closure: Safe

Risk Assessment Final Risk Level: Moderate

Case Action:

Services and Referrals Provided to the Family:

Other Services:

n/a

Other Actions Taken to Mitigate Risk:

n/a

Other Previous Report of Abuse/Neglect:

Intake Date(s):

Summary of Previous Allegation(s)/Investigation:

Investigation Findings:

Safety and Risk Assessment Factors Identified:

Case Action:

Services and Referrals Provided to the Family:

Other Services:

Other Actions Taken to Mitigate Risk:

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.