Child Fatality Report Release of Information to the Public

Person ID: 114153092

County of Child's Residence: ROCKWALL

Gender: Female

Age: 2 Year(s) 5 Month(s)

Date of Death: 07/09/2025

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: Cheatham,Essence

Current Report(s) of Abuse/Neglect:

Intake Date(s): 07/09/2025

Summary of Allegation(s)/Investigation:

The Department received a referral stating that the deceased child's mother left for work around noon and left the deceased child in the bedroom, with the television on, and leaving her some snacks. It was unknown if anyone else was in the room with the child and the other residents of the home were said to be asleep. A 911 call was made at around 2:23pm indicating the child was found floating face down in the pool. The child was not breathing and was taken to the hospital.

The Department's investigation determined through interviews with the residents of the home that the mother and child had been staying at the residence, with family, for the past couple of weeks and had their own bedroom in the home. The mother had to be at work around noon, and she left the child in their room watching television but didn't tell anyone else in the home that she was leaving for work or ask them to supervise the child while she was gone. At some point after the mother left, the child was able to go out the backdoor of the residence and access the in-ground pool, where she was later found face down in the pool. The mother moved out of the residence and to another state and was not able to be interviewed by the Department per law enforcement request, as they needed to interview her first.

The medical examiner conducted an autopsy and ruled the manner of death was accidental and caused by drowning.

Law enforcement conducted an investigation, and the mother had an active felony warrant for Injury to a Child causing serious bodily injury at the close of the Department's investigation.

Investigation Findings:

The Department confirmed the mother committed neglectful supervision of the deceased child, which led to her death.

Safety and Risk Assessments not required per policy.

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 declined services and referrals offered.

Other Actions Taken to Mitigate Risk:

Not applicable.

The Department's investigation was closed.

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:

Not applicable.

Previous Report of Abuse/Neglect:

Intake Date(s): 02/10/2025

Summary of Previous Allegation(s)/Investigation:

The Department received a report stating that Law Enforcement stopped a vehicle on the night of 02/09/2010 for running a stop sign and smelled the odor of marijuana. The deceased child's mother and father were in the back seat with the father holding the deceased child unsecured on his lap. The car was being driven by the child's paternal step grandfather, who told officers that they had smoked marijuana at home. The step grandfather passed a sobriety test. There were also open containers of alcohol in the vehicle. The mother was arrested for having a usable amount of marijuana in her possession.

The Department's investigation determined that the mother had taken the child to the father's home as they were having a birthday party for the child. She admitted to having a small amount of marijuana on her and the judge let her go without a bond. She admitted to smoking a little marijuana but would smoke on the balcony when the child was asleep or when the child was with other caregivers. The father also admitted to marijuana use but not around the child. The residence was found to smell of marijuana and the step grandfather refused to be interviewed. The mother and father were asked to submit drug testing, but it is not known if this was completed. Other family members were contacted and had no concerns for the child's care. The child was observed and no concerns noted.

Investigation Findings:

The Department confirmed the mother committed neglectful supervision of the deceased child.

Safety and Risk Assessment Factors Identified:

Structured Decision Making Safety Assessments:
1.) 02/11/2025: Safety Assessment - Initial: Safe
2.) 04/07/2025: Safety Assessment - Case Closure: Safe

Risk Assessment Final Risk Level: Moderate

Case Action:

Services and Referrals Provided to the Family:

Other Services:

No services or referrals provided.

Other Actions Taken to Mitigate Risk:

Not applicable.

The Department's investigation was closed.

Previous Report of Abuse/Neglect:

Intake Date(s): 06/07/2024

Summary of Previous Allegation(s)/Investigation:

The Department received a report stating emergency services were contacted as the deceased child was having trouble breathing. The deceased child's mother was giving the child a bath and walked away for a couple of seconds to get something. When she returned, the child's face was submerged in the water. The mother immediately took the child out of the bathtub and called for the child's maternal grandfather who began cardiopulmonary resuscitation while mother contacted emergency services. The child was taken to the hospital for evaluation but was breathing on her own. There was marijuana found inside the mother?s bedroom, but she did not appear to be under the influence.

The Department's investigation determined the mother left the child alone in the bathtub twice, and the second

time she left the bathroom she was gone for almost five minutes. The mother stated she heard the child splashing and assumed she was playing but when she went to check on her, the child was submerged under water face up, with feces and vomit floating in the tub. She removed the child from the bathtub and placed her on the bed. The maternal grandfather had heard the mother scream and when he saw the child not breathing, began cardiopulmonary resuscitation and the mother called 911 for help. The child was taken to the hospital and required breathing assistance due to respiratory distress. The child's father resided with his parents and was not involved in the incident however was using marijuana and had unaddressed mental health issues. The mother and grandfather were drug tested and were negative for all substances.

Investigation Findings:

The Department confirmed the mother committed neglectful supervision of the deceased child.

Safety and Risk Assessment Factors Identified:

Structured Decision Making Safety Assessments:
1.) 06/08/2024: Safety Assessment - Initial: Safe
2.) 06/17/2024: Safety Assessment - Reassessment: Safe with plan
3.) 07/09/2024: Safety Assessment - Reassessment: Safe with plan
4.) 07/24/2024: Safety Assessment - Case Closure: Safe

Risk Assessment Final Risk Level: Moderate

Case Action:

Services and Referrals Provided to the Family:

Other Services:

The mother and father agreed to complete services and referrals provided to include counseling and evaluation services as well as services provided by Family-Based Safety Services.

Other Actions Taken to Mitigate Risk:

A safety plan was initiated in which the mother and father agreed to be supervised when with the child. Due to additional concerns, a parent-child safety placement was initiated in which the deceased child would reside with the maternal great grandmother, and the mother and father would have supervised visits. The family agreed to services and the case was opened to Family-Based Safety Services on 07/15/2024. During this case, the mother successfully completed counseling and evaluation services and parent training, and the child was referred to early childhood intervention services and daycare. The father did not complete services recommended. The Family Based Safety Services case was closed on 12/17/2024 with the child residing with the mother.

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 05/12/2026 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.