



Report Identification Number: SY-16-001

Prepared by: Syracuse Regional Office

Issue Date: 6/22/2016

This report, prepared pursuant to section 20(5) of the Social Services Law (SSL), concerns:

- A report made to the New York Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR) involving the death of a child.
- The death of a child for whom child protective services has an open case.
- The death of a child whose care and custody or custody and guardianship has been transferred to an authorized agency.
- The death of a child for whom the local department of social services has an open preventive service case.

The Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) is mandated by section 20 of the SSL to investigate or cause for the investigation of the cause and circumstances surrounding the death, review such investigation, and prepare and issue a fatality report in regard to the categories of deaths noted above involving a child, except where a local or regional fatality review team issues a report, as authorized by law.

Such report must include: the cause of death; the identification of child protective or other services provided or actions taken regard to such child and child's family; any extraordinary or pertinent information concerning the circumstances of the child's death; whether the child or the child's family received assistance, care or services from the social services district prior to the child's death; any action or further investigation undertaken by OCFS or the social services district since the child's death; and as appropriate, recommendations for local or state administrative or policy changes.

This report contains no information that would identify the deceased child, his or her siblings, the parent, parents, or other persons legally responsible for the child, and any members of the deceased child's household.

By statute, this report will be forwarded to the social services district, chief county executive officer, chairperson of the local legislative body of the county where the child died and the social services district that had legal custody of the child, if different. Notice of the issuance of this report will be sent to the Speaker of the Assembly and the Temporary President of the Senate of the State of New York.

This report may **only** be disclosed to the public by OCFS pursuant to section 20(5) of the SSL. **It may be released by OCFS only after OCFS has determined that such disclosure is not contrary to the best interests of the deceased child's siblings or other children in the household.**

OCFS' review included an examination of actions taken by individual caseworkers and supervisors within the social services district and agencies under contract with the social services district. The observations and recommendations contained in this report reflect OCFS' assessment and the performance of these agencies.



Abbreviations

Relationships		
BM-Biological Mother	SM-Subject Mother	SC-Subject Child
BF-Biological Father	SF-Subject Father	OC-Other Child
MGM-Maternal Grand Mother	MGF-Maternal Grand Father	FF-Foster Father
PGM-Paternal Grand Mother	PGF-Paternal Grand Father	DCP-Day Care Provider
MGGM-Maternal Great Grand Mother	MGGF-Maternal Great Grand Father	PGGF-Paternal Great Grand Father
PGGM-Paternal Great Grand Mother	MA/MU-Maternal Aunt/Maternal Uncle	PA/PU-Paternal Aunt/Paternal Uncle
Contacts		
LE-Law Enforcement	CW-Case Worker	CP-Case Planner
Dr.-Doctor	ME-Medical Examiner	EMS-Emergency Medical Services
DC-Day Care	FD-Fire Department	BM-Biological Mother
CPR-Cardio-pulmonary Resuscitation		
Allegations		
FX-Fractures	II-Internal Injuries	L/B/W-Lacerations/Bruises/Welts
S/D/S-Swelling/Dislocation/Sprains	C/T/S-Choking/Twisting/Shaking	B/S-Burns/Scalding
P/Nx-Poisoning/ Noxious Substance	XCP-Excessive Corporal Punishment	PD/AM-Parent's Drug Alcohol Misuse
CD/A-Child's Drug/Alcohol Use	LMC-Lack of Medical Care	EdN-Educational Neglect
EN-Emotional Neglect	SA-Sexual Abuse	M/FTTH-Malnutrition/Failure-to-thrive
IF/C/S-Inadequate Food/ Clothing/ Shelter	IG-Inadequate Guardianship	LS-Lack of Supervision
Ab-Abandonment	OTH/COI-Others	
Miscellaneous		
IND-Indicated	UNF-Unfounded	SO-Sexual Offender
Sub-Substantiated	Unsub-Unsubstantiated	DV-Domestic Violence
LDSS-Local Department of Social Service	ACS-Administration for Children's Services	NYPD-New York City Police Department
PPRS-Purchased Preventive Rehabilitative Services		

Case Information



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Report Type: Child Deceased
Age: 1 month(s)

Jurisdiction: Cayuga
Gender: Female

Date of Death: 01/01/2016
Initial Date OCFS Notified: 01/01/2016

Presenting Information

On 12/31/15 SM and SF placed five week old SC in parents' bed to sleep with them. During the night, SC stopped breathing as a result of suffocation. SC died on 1/1/16. SC's sibling had an unknown role and was not injured during the incident.

Executive Summary

The State Central Register (SCR) received a report on 1/1/16 alleging DOA/Fatality and IG against SM and SF regarding the SC. There were no allegations made regarding the surviving sibling that resided at the home. This was a report of SF and SM that placed the SC into bed with them to sleep. The investigation determined that SF was using drugs and alcohol prior to placing the SC in bed with him. The SF fell asleep with the SC in his arm on 12/31/16. The SF woke the next morning, 1/1/16, to find the SC underneath him and not breathing. The SF called EMS then the SC was subsequently transported to the Auburn Community Hospital where the SC was pronounced dead at 9:01 am on 1/1/16.

The final autopsy report from the ME stated the SC's cause of death was suffocation due to overlaying. The ME's final autopsy report also reported the manner of death as an accident.

Cayuga County Department of Human Services (CCDHS) initiated their investigation on 1/1/16 in collaboration with LE. LE determined that criminal charges would not be pursued. Caseworker was also asked by LE not to see the family without LE to minimize the family's exposure to numerous interviews. CCDHS gathered information from LE to determine safety of the surviving sibling within 24 hours however there was not a documented assessment or report in the case record. On 1/1/16 LE reported that the home appeared to be safe and observed the child while at the hospital. CCDHS on-call caseworker did not complete a 24 hour safety assessment or report as the district stated that the on-call caseworker was unaware that the report was required. Face to face contact with the family occurred on 1/7/16 after direction from the Syracuse Regional Office (SRO). Throughout the remainder of the case collateral contacts and home visits were made and safety decisions were appropriate based on case circumstances. Services were offered to the family however the family was not receptive to services that were on going. The investigation remains open at the time this report was written.

Findings Related to the CPS Investigation of the Fatality

Safety Assessment:

- **Was sufficient information gathered to make the decision recorded on the:**
 - **Approved Initial Safety Assessment?** Yes
 - **Safety assessment due at the time of determination?** Unable to Determine
- **Was the safety decision on the approved Initial Safety Assessment appropriate?** Yes

Determination:

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- **Was sufficient information gathered to make determination(s) for all allegations as well as any others identified in the course of the investigation?** The CPS report had not yet been determined at the time this Fatality report was issued.
- **Was the determination made by the district to unfound or indicate appropriate?** Unable to Determine

Explain:

This case was open at the time of this report.

Was the decision to close the case appropriate? N/A

Was casework activity commensurate with appropriate and relevant statutory or regulatory requirements? No

Was there sufficient documentation of supervisory consultation? Yes, the case record has detail of the consultation.

Explain:

This case remains open at the time of the report.

Required Actions Related to the Fatality

Are there Required Actions related to the compliance issue(s)? Yes No

Issue:	Timely/Adequate 24 Hour Assessment
Summary:	The 24 hour safety assessment form and 24 hour report were not completed by the on-call caseworker although adequate information was gathered to make an appropriate 24 hour safety assessment.
Legal Reference:	SSL 424(6);18 NYCRR 432.2(b)(3)(i)
Action:	Develop plan that supports the completion of the 24 hour assessment and report as per regulations.

Fatality-Related Information and Investigative Activities

Incident Information

Date of Death: 01/01/2016

Time of Death: 09:01 AM

Time of fatal incident, if different than time of death: Unknown

County where fatality incident occurred: CAYUGA

Was 911 or local emergency number called? Yes

Time of Call: 08:16 AM

Did EMS to respond to the scene? Yes

At time of incident leading to death, had child used alcohol or drugs? No

Child's activity at time of incident:

Sleeping

Working

Driving / Vehicle occupant



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Playing
 Other

Eating

Unknown

Did child have supervision at time of incident leading to death? Yes

Is the caretaker listed in the Household Composition? Yes - Caregiver

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At time of incident supervisor was:

- Drug Impaired
- Alcohol Impaired
- Distracted
- Impaired by disability
- Absent
- Asleep
- Impaired by illness
- Other:

Total number of deaths at incident event:

Children ages 0-18: 1

Household Composition at time of Fatality

Household	Relationship	Role	Gender	Age
Deceased Child's Household	Deceased Child	Alleged Victim	Female	1 Month(s)
Deceased Child's Household	Father	Alleged Perpetrator	Male	34 Year(s)
Deceased Child's Household	Grandparent	No Role	Female	68 Year(s)
Deceased Child's Household	Mother	Alleged Perpetrator	Female	24 Year(s)
Deceased Child's Household	Sibling	No Role	Male	2 Year(s)
Other Household 1	Other Adult	No Role	Male	25 Year(s)

LDSS Response

CCDHS initiated their investigation on 1/1/16. After consultation with SRO, contact was made with the family on 1/7/16 at the family's home and conducted interviews with both parents, a grandparent that lives in the home and the surviving sibling was seen. The 24 hour safety assessment was not completed by the on-call caseworker as the caseworker was unaware that this report was required. Safety Assessments were adequately completed at 7days, and 30 days. Collateral contacts were made with relevant sources and the caseworker made visits to the family to continue to assess safety and risk within the home to the surviving sibling. The SM and SF were offered services which they initially accepted however they became reluctant to services as the investigation continued. CCDHS collaborated with LE throughout the investigation. The investigation remains open at the time of this report however CCDHS is consulting with their legal department before they make a determination as well as to review their findings with the family.

Official Manner and Cause of Death

Official Manner: Accident

Primary Cause of Death: From an injury - external cause

Person Declaring Official Manner and Cause of Death: Medical Examiner



Multidisciplinary Investigation/Review

Was the fatality investigation conducted by a Multidisciplinary Team (MDT)? Yes

Was the fatality reviewed by an OCFS approved Child Fatality Review Team? No

Comments: Cayuga County does not have a Child Fatality Review Team.

SCR Fatality Report Summary

Alleged Victim(s)	Alleged Perpetrator(s)	Allegation(s)	Allegation Outcome
028581 - Deceased Child, Female, 1 Mons	028582 - Mother, Female, 24 Year(s)	DOA / Fatality	Pending
028581 - Deceased Child, Female, 1 Mons	028583 - Father, Male, 34 Year(s)	DOA / Fatality	Pending
028581 - Deceased Child, Female, 1 Mons	028582 - Mother, Female, 24 Year(s)	Inadequate Guardianship	Pending
028581 - Deceased Child, Female, 1 Mons	028583 - Father, Male, 34 Year(s)	Inadequate Guardianship	Pending

CPS Fatality Casework/Investigative Activities

	Yes	No	N/A	Unable to Determine
All children observed?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When appropriate, children were interviewed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alleged subject(s) interviewed face-to-face?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All 'other persons named' interviewed face-to-face?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contact with source?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All appropriate Collaterals contacted?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was a death-scene investigation performed?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was there discussion with all parties (youth, other household members, and staff) who were present that day (if nonverbal, observation and comments in case notes)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coordination of investigation with law enforcement?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was there timely entry of progress notes and other required documentation?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



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Fatality Safety Assessment Activities

	Yes	No	N/A	Unable to Determine
Were there any surviving siblings or other children in the household?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was there an adequate safety assessment of impending or immediate danger to surviving siblings/other children in the household named in the report:				
Within 24 hours?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
At 7 days?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
At 30 days?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was there an approved Initial Safety Assessment for all surviving siblings/ other children in the household within 24 hours?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there any safety issues that need to be referred back to the local district?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When safety factors were present that placed the surviving siblings/other children in the household in impending or immediate danger of serious harm, were the safety interventions, including parent/caretaker actions adequate?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Fatality Risk Assessment / Risk Assessment Profile

	Yes	No	N/A	Unable to Determine
Was the risk assessment/RAP adequate in this case?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
During the course of the investigation, was sufficient information gathered to assess risk to all surviving siblings/other children in the household?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was there an adequate assessment of the family's need for services?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did the protective factors in this case require the LDSS to file a petition in Family Court at any time during or after the investigation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Were appropriate/needed services offered in this case	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Placement Activities in Response to the Fatality Investigation

	Yes	No	N/A	Unable to Determine
Did the safety factors in the case show the need for the surviving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



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siblings/other children in the household be removed or placed in foster care at any time during this fatality investigation?				
Were there surviving siblings/other children in the household removed as a result of this fatality report/investigation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Legal Activity Related to the Fatality

Was there legal activity as a result of the fatality investigation? There was no legal activity

Services Provided to the Family in Response to the Fatality

Services	Provided After Death	Offered, but Refused	Offered, Unknown if Used	Needed but not Offered	Needed but Unavailable	N/A	CDR Lead to Referral
Bereavement counseling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Economic support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Funeral arrangements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mental health services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foster care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legal services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Homemaking Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parenting Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Domestic Violence Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Early Intervention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alcohol/Substance abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child Care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intensive case management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family or others as safety resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

History Prior to the Fatality



Child Information

- Did the child have a history of alleged child abuse/maltreatment? No
- Was there an open CPS case with this child at the time of death? No
- Was the child ever placed outside of the home prior to the death? No
- Were there any siblings ever placed outside of the home prior to this child's death? Yes
- Was the child acutely ill during the two weeks before death? No

Infants Under One Year Old

During pregnancy, mother:

- Had medical complications / infections
- Misused over-the-counter or prescription drugs
- Experienced domestic violence
- Was not noted in the case record to have any of the issues listed
- Had heavy alcohol use
- Smoked tobacco
- Used illicit drugs

Infant was born:

- Drug exposed
- With neither of the issues listed noted in case record
- With fetal alcohol effects or syndrome

CPS - Investigative History Three Years Prior to the Fatality

There is no CPS investigative history within three years prior to the fatality.

CPS - Investigative History More Than Three Years Prior to the Fatality

One report investigated March, 2009 to May, 2009 that indicated bio-mother and half siblings bio-father of Inadequate Guardianship which resulted in the removal of the half-sibling and placed in the care and custody of a family member directly from the hospital. The family member was awarded custody due to article 10 petition filed by the LDSS, at no time was the half-sibling placed into foster care.

Known CPS History Outside of NYS

There is no know history outside of New York State.

Services Open at the Time of the Fatality

Required Action(s)

Are there Required Actions related to compliance issues for provisions of CPS or Preventive services ?

- Yes
- No



Preventive Services History

There is no record of Preventive Services History provided to the deceased child, the deceased child's siblings, and/or the other children residing in the deceased child's household at the time of the fatality.

Required Action(s)

Are there Required Actions related to the compliance issues for provision of Foster Care Services?

Yes No

Foster Care Placement History

There is no record of foster care placement history provided to the deceased child, the deceased child's siblings, and/or the other children residing in the deceased child's household at the time of the fatality.

Legal History Within Three Years Prior to the Fatality

Was there any legal activity within three years prior to the fatality investigation? There was no legal activity

Recommended Action(s)

Are there any recommended actions for local or state administrative or policy changes? Yes No

Are there any recommended prevention activities resulting from the review? Yes No