

Child Death, Serious Injury or Egregious Incident Summary Report

Type of Report: 90-Day Final

Case Tracking Number: 100715DSP-PN-35 Agency: Vilas County Department of Social Services

Child Information: Age: 3 months Gender: Female Male
Race or Ethnicity: Native American
Special needs: none

Child's Residence: In-home Out-of-home care placement

Date of Incident: 07/15/2010

Description of the incident, including the suspected cause of death, injury or egregious abuse or neglect:

The child was found "cold and gray" in her crib by her father, who attempted CPR and contacted authorities. The child was transported to a nearby hospital, where she was pronounced deceased. The child's death was deemed suspicious by law enforcement due to conflicting information by family members as to what transpired prior to the child's death and who was responsible for her care. Autopsy results have not been made available, therefore the cause of death is unknown at this time.

Findings by agency, including material circumstances leading to incident:

The agency substantiated neglect by the father to the child and her sibling due to the conditions of the home at the time of the child's death, which was described as unsanitary. In addition, police found illegal drugs and paraphernalia in the home. Allegations of physical abuse of the child were unsubstantiated. The child's father reported that the child was awake and being cared for by various family members in the home before being fed and put down for a nap. The father checked on the child approximately 2 - 2 1/2 hours later because he felt the child was napping longer than usual. He then found that the child was cold to the touch and her face was "ashen." The father reportedly began CPR and contacted police, who responded to the home immediately. The father left before police arrived because he was wanted on outstanding warrants. The father's adult daughter told police at that time that she was responsible for the child's care. Information from the father was gathered at a later date after he was found and arrested by police for other warrants.

Additional information for children in home:

Description of the child's family:

The child was residing with her mother, father, 2-year-old sibling, an adult sibling, and the adult sibling's child. Family members initially denied that the father was living in the home. It was later determined that he was living in the home and providing care for the child and her sibling. At the time of the incident, the child's mother was incarcerated.

Yes No **Statement of Services:** Were services under ch. 48 or ch. 938 being provided to the child, family or alleged maltreater at the time of the incident, including any referrals received by the agency or reports being investigated at time of incident?

If "Yes", briefly describe the type of services, date(s) of last contact between agency and recipient(s) of those services, and the person(s) receiving those services:

At the time of the incident, the family was receiving services from the Indian Child Welfare agency of the tribe of one of the child's parents as a result of previous contact with the county agency.

Summary of all involvement in services under ch. 48 or ch. 938 by child's parents or alleged maltreater in the previous five years:

Since 2006, the agency has screened in and investigated eight child protective services reports. Please refer to the next section for more detailed information regarding those reports. In addition, two child welfare reports were screened in that did not require an investigation by the agency.

Summary of actions taken by the agency under ch. 48, including any investigation of a report or referrals to services involving the child, any member of the child's family or alleged maltreater:

From 2002 through the current incident, the agency has screened in and investigated 16 child protective services reports. In addition, seven reports were screened in for child welfare services with no investigation required.

In 2002, the agency received and investigated four separate reports alleging physical abuse to four of the child's siblings by the parents. Two of the reports were unsubstantiated and two had findings of "Likely to Occur," a finding that is no longer used in Wisconsin. Two additional non-CPS reports were received and services were offered to the family by the Indian Child Welfare (ICW) agency of the parent's tribe.

In 2003, the agency received two reports of neglect by the parents. One report was substantiated and resulted in the removal of all six children from their parents' care. Since that time, the ICW agency has provided services to the family and the children have remained in out-of-home care. In addition, a report of maltreatment to one of the child's siblings by an unrelated person was received. That allegation was unsubstantiated after investigation.

In 2004, an allegation of physical abuse of one of the child's siblings by a relative caregiver was received. The allegation was unsubstantiated after investigation.

In 2006, physical abuse to one of the child's siblings by a relative caregiver was alleged. The allegation was unsubstantiated, but the county and tribe continued to provide services to the family, as the family's case had been open since 2003.

In 2007, an allegation of maltreatment to one of the child's siblings by a relative was investigated and found to be unsubstantiated. The county agency closed the family's case, as the family was receiving services from the ICW agency.

In 2008, physical abuse to another sibling by a different relative caregiver was alleged. This allegation was unsubstantiated and the county closed the family's case, as services were being provided by the tribe's ICW agency.

In 2009, an allegation of maltreatment of one of the child's siblings by an unrelated adult was received. That allegation was unsubstantiated, but the agency continued to provide non-CPS services to that child as the child had already been receiving services prior to the allegation.

In 2010, four reports of alleged maltreatment were received, including the report of the current incident. In April 2010, neglect of the child was alleged and found to be substantiated. The county agency closed the family's case after investigation, as the tribe was providing services to the family. In May 2010, two separate reports of maltreatment to two of the child's siblings by relatives were received. The allegation of maltreatment to one child was substantiated, while the allegation regarding the other child was unsubstantiated after investigation. The county agency again closed the family's case because the tribe was providing services to the family.

Summary of any investigation conducted under ch. 48 or ch. 938 and any services provided to the family since the date of the incident:

The agency screened in and investigated the report pertaining to the child's death. As a result of the investigation neglect was substantiated, but not believed to be the cause of the child's death. Physical abuse to the child was found to be unsubstantiated. The family is receiving services through the tribe and the county agency's case is closed.

Additional information for children in out-of-home (OHC) placement at time of incident:

Description of the OHC placement and basis for decision to place child there:

N/A

Description of all other persons residing in the OHC placement home:

N/A

Licensing history: Including type of license, duration of license, summary of any violations by licensee or an employee of licensee that constitutes a substantial failure to protect and promote the welfare of the child.

N/A

*** Summary of actions taken by agency in response to the incident:**

The agency screened in and investigated the report pertaining to the child's death. The agency worked with the tribal Indian Child Welfare worker and tribal police in conducting the investigation. The agency substantiated neglect, although this is not believed to have caused the child's death. The cause of death remains unknown at this time. The child's sibling and cousin were found to be unsafe in the home. Services are being provided to the family through the tribe and the county agency's case is closed.

***Summary of policy or practice changes to address identified issues:**

Pending - an on-site review will be conducted.

***Recommendations for further changes in policies, practices, rules or statutes needed to address identified issues:**

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Division of Safety and Permanence

Pending - an on-site review will be conducted.

Statement of Completion:

Yes No This 90-day summary report completes the Division of Safety and Permanence (DSP) review of this case.

* If a full report including agency actions, changes in policies or practices and recommendations for further changes was not completed within 90 days, the DSP will complete and submit the final summary report within 6 months.

This final summary report completes the DSP review of this case.