



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

REPORT ON THE Fatality OF:

Anna LaRock

Date of Birth: 05/07/2013

Date of Death: 08/30/2013

Date of Oral Report: 8/30/13

FAMILY KNOWN TO:

Clearfield County Children, Youth and Family Services
Jefferson County Children, Youth and Family Services

REPORT FINALIZED ON: 5/7/15

This report is confidential under the provisions of the Child Protective Services Law and cannot be released.

(23 Pa. C.S. Section 6340)

Unauthorized release is prohibited under penalty of law.

(23 Pa. C.S. 6349 (b))

Reason for Review:

Senate Bill 1147, Printer's Number 2159 was signed into law on July 3, 2008. The bill became effective on December 30, 2008 and is known as Act 33 of 2008. As part of Act 33 of 2008, DPW must conduct a review and provide a written report of all cases of suspected child abuse that result in a child fatality or near fatality. This written report must be completed as soon as possible but no later than six months after the date the report was registered with ChildLine for investigation.

Act 33 of 2008 also requires that county children and youth agencies convene a review when a report of child abuse involving a child fatality or near fatality is indicated or when a status determination has not been made regarding the report within 30 days of the oral report to ChildLine. Clearfield County has convened a review team on September 30, 2013 in accordance with Act 33 of 2008 related to this report.

Family Constellation:

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Relationship:</u>	<u>Date of Birth:</u>
Anna LaRock	Victim Child	05/17/13
██████████	Mother ██████████	██████/87
██████████	Father ██████████	██████/88
██████████	Sibling	██████/07
██████████	Sibling	██████/11
██████████	Paternal Grandmother ██████████	██████/68

Notification of Child (Near) Fatality:

On August 30, 2014, Clearfield County Children, Youth and Family Services received a call ██████████ that there was an alleged child death in ██████████, Pennsylvania. The agency contacted Clearfield County Control about the incident and was referred to the ██████████ Police. It was confirmed that the ██████████ Police responded to the home due to a 911 call which stated that the child was unresponsive.

There were no attempts of CPR prior to the police and emergency medical technicians arriving on the scene. The victim child allegedly had marks on her face from her pacifier being secured in her mouth. ██████████ due to the paternal grandmother reporting that the mother tied blankets around the victim child to secure the pacifier in her mouth.

The case was originally registered [REDACTED] on August 30, 2013. [REDACTED] wrapping two receiving blankets around the victim child's face to hold a pacifier in the victim child's mouth. [REDACTED]

On September 4, 2013 the case was registered as a child fatality [REDACTED] Clearfield County Children, Youth and Family Services contacted [REDACTED] on August 30, 2013 to certify this report as a fatality, but were informed [REDACTED] that a doctor must declare the death [REDACTED]. On September 4, 2013 [REDACTED] contacted Clearfield County Children, Youth and Family Services to inform the agency that the allegations should have been given [REDACTED] for a near fatality.

Summary of DPW Child (Near) Fatality Review Activities:

The Western Region, Office of Children, Youth and Families obtained and reviewed the case record pertaining to the victim child's family, interviewed the current assigned caseworker and casework supervisor [REDACTED], and participated in the Child Death Review meetings on September 30, 2013 and November 18, 2013.

Children and Youth Involvement prior to Incident:

[REDACTED] Jefferson County Children and Youth Services referred the case to Clearfield County Children, Youth and Family Services [REDACTED] concerns when the family moved to Clearfield County. The allegations were that the victim child's sibling, who was 2 months old, was in his car seat day and night and was not getting the proper nurturing, the victim child's mother was unstable, she was abandoned by her mother as a child and was abused by her step mother, and the victim child's father was allegedly a drug user.

Jefferson County Children and Youth Services had met with the family on August 30, 2007 and September 3, 2007. There was a safety plan that the victim child's father was not allowed to be alone with the victim child's sibling.

On 9/14/2007, the Clearfield County Children, Youth and Family Services caseworker went to the home and met with the family. The victim child's mother was involved with services [REDACTED] at the time. The caseworker received verification [REDACTED]. The case was closed on October 25, 2007.

On November 7, 2007, Clearfield County Children, Youth and Family Services received a call that the reporting source heard [REDACTED] that the police were called to

the home because the victim child's sibling, who was 4 months old, was allegedly left alone for an hour at a time and was not being washed regularly. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The call was screened out by Clearfield County Children, Youth and Family Services.

On June 18, 2008, a call was received by Clearfield County Children, Youth and Family Services that the reporting source noticed the victim child's sibling, who was 11 months old, looked very sick and had sunken eyes. The reporting source overheard the victim child's mother in the park saying that the child would only eat crackers and talking about various things relating to "the grandmother coming in and taking the child". The caseworker went to the home of the victim child's mother and found the victim child's sibling to be very well taken care of. The victim child's sibling was eating bologna and appeared not to be under nourished. The report was screened out as there was no abuse reported.

On June 28, 2008, a call was received by Clearfield County Children, Youth and Family Services with concerns that the victim child's mother left the victim child's sibling, who was 1 year old, with the victim child's mother's step-grandmother, who was living in Jefferson County, and the sibling was dirty and hungry and needed medical treatment for a gash on his head. There was communication back and forth between Jefferson County Children and Youth Services and Clearfield County Children, Youth and Family Services in regards to the sibling. A caseworker from Jefferson County Children and Youth Services contacted the victim child's mother's step-grandmother who reported she had clothes, food and diapers and that the reported injury was from a previous fall and the victim child's sibling didn't even have a scab on it. The caseworker contacted ChildLine to check clearances on the victim child's mother's step-grandmother, which she cleared. Jefferson County Children and Youth Services did a verbal safety plan for the victim child's sibling to stay with the victim child's mother's step-grandmother.

Clearfield County Children, Youth and Family Services requested that Jefferson County Children and Youth Services do a safety/home check on Monday, June 30, 2008. Jefferson County Children and Youth Services never visited the home because Clearfield County Children, Youth and Family Services gave the victim child's mother permission to get the victim child's sibling since there were no custody reasons why she could not have the victim child's sibling. Clearfield County Children, Youth and Family Services made arrangements to meet with the victim child's mother and sibling.

A home visit was conducted by Clearfield County Children, Youth and Family Services with the victim child's mother on July 1, 2008 and the family was referred [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The agency referred the family [REDACTED]

On July 21, 2008, the victim child's mother reported she was moving back in with the victim child's father in Jefferson County. On July 30, 2008 it was confirmed that the victim child's mother and father were living together in Jefferson County and the case was referred to Jefferson County Children and Youth Services with low risk.

A caseworker from Jefferson County Children and Youth Services made a home visit on August 13, 2008. The victim child's mother requested a referral [REDACTED] which was followed through on by the county caseworker. Jefferson County Children and Youth Services closed the case on October 15, 2008 once services were in place. [REDACTED]

A report came into Jefferson County Children and Youth Services on May 3, 2009 as moderate risk. The victim child's mother contacted the police after a domestic dispute and the victim child's father had taken the victim child's sibling with no car seat. The victim child's father appeared at the agency on May 4, 2009 to obtain information on how to gain custody. A caseworker made home visits on May 5, 2009 and May 6, 2009 and determined the child to be safe. The family was offered [REDACTED], but the family declined. The case was closed on May 11, 2009.

On November 18, 2009, Jefferson County Children and Youth Services received a report with allegations involving domestic violence and possible injury to the victim child's sibling. A caseworker made an announced home visit on November 24, 2009. The victim child's parents denied domestic violence and the child's sibling had no visible marks. Collateral contacts were made [REDACTED] and they expressed no concerns at that time. The case was closed on December 16, 2009.

The last report received by Jefferson County Children and Youth Services was on March 5, 2010 with concerns for the victim child's mother's well-being and that the victim child's sibling had a cut on his lip. No injury to the child was noted in the dictation. A collateral contact was made [REDACTED] [REDACTED] reported never seeing marks on the child and that the mother and child were participating [REDACTED]. The case was closed on March 25, 2010.

On December 13, 2010, a call was received by Clearfield County Children, Youth and Family Services that the victim child's father took the victim child's sibling, who was 3 years old, while the victim child's mother was shopping. The report was screened out as there was no abuse reported. The victim child's mother found a long letter in which the victim child's father stated that he was taking the victim child's sibling to his new girlfriend's for a few days and that he had filed for custody. Clearfield County Children, Youth and Family Services instructed the victim child's mother to notify the police

On December 27, 2011, a call was received by Clearfield County Children, Youth and Family Services that the victim child's sibling, who was 2 months old, had bruises. A Clearfield County Children, Youth and Family Services caseworker made a home visit the same day and found the sibling did not have any bruises. The caseworker contacted the sibling's primary care physician (PCP) on January 3, 2012 and February 17, 2012 to confirm the sibling's attendance at medical appointments. The caseworker made a home visit on February 17, 2012. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The case was closed on February 21, 2012.

On June 26, 2013, Clearfield County Children, Youth and Family Services received a phone call regarding a concern for the supervision and missed medical appointments for the victim child's sibling who was 2 years old at the time. A home visit was made on June 28, 2013. Another home visit was made on July 24, 2013. On August 6, 2013, the caseworker contacted the sibling's PCP and confirmed attendance at scheduled appointments. The agency referred the victim child's sibling [REDACTED] and closed the case on August 14, 2013.

Circumstances of Child Fatality and Related Case Activity:

The case was originally registered [REDACTED] on August 30, 2013. [REDACTED] wrapping two receiving blankets around the victim child's face to hold a pacifier in the victim child's mouth. [REDACTED]

The victim child was found deceased on the morning of August 30, 2013 by her mother. The mother allegedly put the child to bed on the evening of August 29, 2013 between 9:30 pm and 10:00 pm. The mother reported that she put the other children to bed as well. The mother claimed the other children woke up around 12:00 am on August 30, 2013, but the victim child did not wake up. The mother did not check on the victim child. The victim child's father allegedly went to bed on the evening of August 29, 2013 at 9:30 pm. The father reported that the mother put the victim child to bed.

The mother went to check on the victim child on the morning of August 30, 2013 around 7:30 am when she went to get the victim child's sibling ready for school. The mother reported that the victim child was not moving and cold. The father reported he was awakened by the mother's screams. The paternal grandmother called 911. The police and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) responded to the home. It was reported that the victim child was deceased and there were marks on her that resembled the holes in her pacifier. There were also what appeared to be marks around the victim child's face from something being tied around her face. [REDACTED] reported that she witnessed the mother on two occasions securing the victim child's pacifier in her mouth by tying blankets around her head. The victim child's mother denied doing this.

On August 30, 2013 the Clearfield County Children, Youth and Family Services caseworker and supervisor made a home visit to the victim child's home and met with the victim child's mother, father, paternal grandmother, and two siblings to discuss the death of the victim child and assess the safety of the other children in the home. A Safety Assessment completed on August 30, 2013 determined the victim child's siblings to be safe as there were no immediate safety hazards. Clearfield County Children, Youth and Family Services implemented [REDACTED] services to help the family with the appropriate level of services.

On September 4, 2013 the case was registered as a child fatality [REDACTED]

An autopsy was performed on the victim child and the medical examiner ruled the death as Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). The coroner did not sign off on the death certificate until he met with the medical examiner to discuss the concerns that the pacifier was secured in the victim child's mouth and the victim child had marks on her face. The medical examiner and coroner agreed that [REDACTED] there was no evidence of suffocation in the child. During the autopsy, it was also noted that the victim child had a small contusion above her left ear and a small contusion on her forehead above her left eye. The victim child was also found to have [REDACTED] It was determined the victim child did not cause these injuries to herself based on the age of the victim child and the victim child not being mobile.

[REDACTED] it was learned that the victim child had bruising on her prior to her death. The victim child had a patterned contusion on her lower chin and a depression to the lip area, which were consistent with the pacifier being secured in her mouth. The victim child was found to have [REDACTED]. With the victim child not being mobile, it was determined that the victim child did not cause these injuries to herself. It was determined that the injuries to the victim child would have caused pain. [REDACTED] for the injuries to the victim child's mouth and chin [REDACTED]

Current Case Status:

[REDACTED] the agency decided to maintain the children in the home since it was already an active case and there were service providers [REDACTED] The case remains at a high risk level and there are services in the home working with the family. The victim child's two year old sibling is receiving [REDACTED] The victim child's six year old sibling is receiving [REDACTED] The family is receiving [REDACTED] Clearfield County Children, Youth and Family Services facilitated a meeting at the home of the parents [REDACTED] The victim child's mother was referred [REDACTED]

County Strengths and Deficiencies and Recommendations for Change as Identified by the County's Child Fatality Report:

Act 33 of 2008 also requires that county children and youth agencies convene a review when a report of child abuse involving a child fatality or near fatality is indicated or when a status determination has not been made regarding the report within 30 days of the oral report to ChildLine. Clearfield County convened a review team on September 30, 2013 in accordance with Act 33 of 2008 related to this report.

- Strengths: The agency responded in a timely manner to assure the safety of the other children in the home, implemented services in the home to address the needs of the other children, pulled together multiple resources to work towards a single cause with the family, and facilitated a meeting at the home of the parents [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- Deficiencies: There was a lack of follow through and monitoring of services when the family moved back and forth between Clearfield and Jefferson Counties. On June 26, 2013 the caseworker went to the home, but did not [REDACTED] address the allegations of the victim child's mother leaving the children home alone. [REDACTED] The case remained high risk, but there were no immediate safety threats to the children.
- Recommendations for Change at the Local Level: The community needs to be better educated on the effects [REDACTED] since the team thought that the mother could have had [REDACTED] and the need of [REDACTED] for children in the county.
- Recommendations for Change at the State Level: No recommendations for change at the state level.

Department Review of County Internal Report:

The Western Regional Office of Children, Youth and Families reviewed Clearfield County Children, Youth and Family Services' internal report on December 6, 2013.

Department of Public Welfare Findings:

- County Strengths: The Clearfield County Children, Youth and Family Services responded in a timely manner to the report, conducted a thorough investigation and offered services to the family.
- County Weaknesses: There was a lack of follow through and monitoring of services when the family moved back and forth between Clearfield and Jefferson Counties. On June 26, 2013 the caseworker went to the home, but did not [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] address the allegations of the victim child's mother leaving the children home alone: [REDACTED]

The case remained high risk and the county made weekly home visits to ensure the safety of the victim child's sibling, but there were no immediate safety threats to the children identified.

- Statutory and Regulatory Areas of Non-Compliance: The review did not identify any compliance issues with statutes and regulations.

Department of Public Welfare Recommendations:

After reviewing the case record, interviewing the caseworker and caseworker supervisor, and attending the Child Death Review meetings on September 30, 2013 and November 18, 2013 the Western Regional Office of Children, Youth and Families has concluded that the Clearfield County Children, Youth and Family Services followed appropriate protocol in regards to the investigation of this referral.