



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

OFFICE OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Gabrielle Williams
Director
Central Region

1401 N. 7th Street, 4th Floor
Bertolino Building
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17105

(717) 772-7702
Fax: (717) 772-7071

REPORT ON THE NEAR FATALITY OF



BORN: March 30, 2009
Date of near death incident: April 17, 2010

**The family was known to Cambria County Children and Youth
Services**

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 No. 1147, now known as Act 33 was signed on July 3, 2008 and went into effect 180 days from that date, December 30, 2008. This Act amends the Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) and sets standards for reviewing and reporting child fatality and near child fatalities that were suspected to have occurred due to child abuse. DPW must conduct child fatality and near fatality reviews and provide a written report on any child fatality or near fatality where child abuse is suspected.

Family Constellation:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Date of Birth</u>
[REDACTED]	Victim child	03/30/09
[REDACTED]	Mother	[REDACTED]/86
[REDACTED]	Father of victim child	[REDACTED]/79
[REDACTED]	Sibling	[REDACTED]/06
[REDACTED]	Maternal grandmother	[REDACTED]/69
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] father	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	Maternal uncle	[REDACTED]/89
[REDACTED]	Maternal aunt	[REDACTED]/90

Notification of Near Fatality:

On April 17, 2010, the mother and her two children were staying in their camper at a campsite in Ebensburg, PA. The mother called 911 and reported that the victim child fell from a standing position backwards and struck his head on a wooden floor. The child was unresponsive for several minutes. When Emergency Medical Services (EMS) arrived, the child was quiet, not moving well, cold and incontinent. Paramedics put the child on oxygen and [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. The child was transported by ambulance to the emergency room at Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center in Johnstown. A CT Scan showed a [REDACTED] flown to Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. The child's maternal grandmother flew with the child. The child was certified in critical condition by [REDACTED] Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center but was expected to survive.

Documents Reviewed and Individuals Interviewed:

For this review, the Central Region Office of Children, Youth and Families reviewed the Cambria County Children and Youth Services investigation file including medical records from Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center, Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, [REDACTED], and Ebensburg Area EMS. The file also included the child's daycare records, and an interview of the mother by [REDACTED]

Pennsylvania State Police in Ebensburg, PA. The Central Region Office of Children, Youth and Families communicated with [REDACTED], Cambria County Children and Youth Services caseworker and [REDACTED], Cambria County Children and Youth Services supervisor.

Previous CY involvement:

Cambria County Children and Youth Services received a report from [REDACTED] on December 11, 2006 alleging that the mother was not properly taking care of her daughter. The child was two days old when the report was made. The reporter stated that the mother requested that her newborn remain in the hospital room with her but did not feed the child for 12 hours. [REDACTED]. It was further reported that the mother had been previously charged for having drugs in her home and was on probation. The newborn's father served jail time for similar charges. The child was discharged to the mother on December 11, 2006. Cambria County Children and Youth Services completed an assessment of these allegations and closed the case record on February 8, 2007 with no concerns [REDACTED].

Circumstances of Child's Near Fatality:

On April 17, 2010, the mother and her two children were staying in their camper at a campsite in Ebensburg, PA. The mother called 911 and reported that her son had been unresponsive for several minutes. The mother stated that the child had fallen from a standing position (in the camper) backwards and struck his head on the wall and wooden floor.

There were concerns regarding the mother's accounts of how the child was injured. The above information is what the mother reported when she called 911. When the mother realized the child was unresponsive, she put the child in a cold shower to try to get a response. When unsuccessful, she called the maternal grandmother, who was staying four campers away, and asked her to come over to her camper. The maternal grandmother went to the mother's camper then yelled to a neighbor at a nearby camper who was a paramedic. The neighbor stayed with the child until Emergency Medical Services (EMS) arrived. The mother told the neighbor that the child fell out of a crib. When EMS arrived, the mother told the EMS paramedic that the child fell backwards on the inside of the stair landing in the camper after losing his footing. The mother told emergency room staff at Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center that the child was just standing and fell backwards.

EMS paramedics found the child quiet and not moving well, and put him on oxygen. The child was cold and incontinent. He was transported by ambulance to Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. He was noted to be [REDACTED] but awake

upon arrival. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] (Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center) listed the child in critical condition. The child was [REDACTED] flown to Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh.

When examined at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh it was discovered that, in addition to the subdural hematoma, the child had greenish, yellow bruising on his forehead, a bruise on his back that appeared older, some bruising to his right ear, a tiny bruise on his right shoulder, a tiny bruise to his left buttock, and some bruising to his shins. The bruising to the child's shins appeared typical of injuries that occur during child's play. The mother reported the bruising to the child's forehead had occurred when the child hit his head on a picnic table at daycare. The other injuries were unexplained.

The child's father had flown to Texas early on the morning of April 15, 2010 and had not returned prior to the child's injuries occurring. The mother reports that he was only alone with the child when she had showered on April 14, 2010. The child attended [REDACTED] April 14th, 15th, and 16th. On April 15, 2010, the child did sustain a bruise on his head after bumping his head on a picnic table. No medical attention was felt necessary by the mother or daycare owner who both witnessed the incident.

Upon the child arriving at the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, [REDACTED] was the child's attending physician. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] bleeding on the brain, meaning that an injury could have happened 72 hours prior to the alleged fall. [REDACTED] stated that most of the blood on the brain was fresh, happening on April 17, 2010. [REDACTED] was non-accidental trauma. The child's brain and eye injuries were indicative of [REDACTED] head trauma due to the severe shearing and rotational forces on the head such as would occur if a child had been forcibly and repeatedly shaken or flung. [REDACTED] expressed further concerns regarding the bruising to the child's ear and the abrasion to the child's back. These injuries were unexplained and concerning for being inflicted injuries. [REDACTED] stated that the mother's explanation of the child falling is not consistent with the injuries the child had received. [REDACTED] stated that a "fall" from a standing position to the floor would not cause devastating brain injury or retinal hemorrhages. Also, there was no medical evidence of a significant external impact to the back of the child's head that would lead to his critical condition. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The presence of acute and subacute blood on the brain discovered when the child received the MRI infers that there may have been more than one event. The acute bleeding strongly indicates an event occurring on April 17, 2010.

[REDACTED] states that the child's injuries would have to have been caused by an adult caregiver. [REDACTED] further stated that any reasonable adult caregiver would realize that any act would be harmful to a child. The child was [REDACTED]. His condition was reported to be stable on April 19, 2010. [REDACTED].

[REDACTED]. They transported the child home. A safety plan for the child's sibling had been developed on April 19, 2010. The sibling was residing with her maternal aunt and uncle in their home. The maternal aunt and uncle agreed to supervise all contact. Prior to the victim child's discharge, a new safety plan was developed to include him. The safety plan for both children was that all contact with the mother would be supervised by the aunt and uncle with the exception of the maternal grandmother supervising the trip home from Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. The aunt and uncle moved into the home of the mother, father, maternal grandmother and the children. Therefore, the plan further stated that either the aunt or uncle had to sleep in the same room as the children. On May 14, 2010, the safety plan was extended to allow the maternal grandmother and the father of the victim child to supervise the mother with both of the children also.

On April 26, 2010, the mother was interviewed by the Pennsylvania State Police in Ebensburg. She denied inflicting any of the injuries to the child intentionally or accidentally. Both children returned to daycare on this date as well to give the aunt and uncle a break from constant supervision. On May 13, 2010, the caseworker went to the daycare and interviewed [REDACTED] did recall all of the people coming to her camper or that [REDACTED] had to go to the hospital. She said that [REDACTED] fell outside. She later said he fell inside. [REDACTED] did not disclose any information [REDACTED]. The caseworker questioned her about who was with her while she was sleeping but who was to confirm that the safety plan was being followed. The child confirmed that the aunt or uncle were with her at all times.

The child attended a follow-up appointment at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh on May 4, 2010. [REDACTED] concluded that the child had normal head circumference and no excess fluid on the brain. [REDACTED] which revealed no fractures to the child.

On May 14, 2010, the Cambria County Emergency Response Team met. The team included medical professionals, service providers and the District Attorney's office. The medical records were reviewed at the meeting. [REDACTED], a pediatrician at [REDACTED] in Johnstown was present at the meeting. [REDACTED] has completed [REDACTED] exams in Cambria County and several surrounding counties for many years. [REDACTED] reviewed the medical records available at the meeting and agreed with [REDACTED] that the injuries to this child were inflicted. [REDACTED]. The team agreed that the caseworker should continue to monitor the safety plan. The caseworker noted that the family continued to be cooperative with the agency. The team discussed the family's agreement to schedule a Family Group Decision Making Meeting. The need for parenting services with the agency social worker was also recommended to continue.

[REDACTED]. A Family Group Decision Making Meeting was held on 6/19/10. The agency continued to provide ongoing supervision with announced and unannounced visits to the family to ensure the safety plan continued. The social worker provided parenting services in the home weekly.

Current / Most Recent Status of Case:

[REDACTED]. Although the mother denied ever [REDACTED] the child, she was the sole caretaker when the event on April 17, 2010 occurred. The agency accepted the case for ongoing services and the safety plan remained in effect. Announced and unannounced visits were being conducted by the caseworker in addition to the weekly social worker visits.

[REDACTED]. A Family Group Decision Meeting was held on June 19, 2010. The Family Service Plan goals were developed from the results of that meeting. These goals included the continued supervision of the mother with the children. Other family supports were approved to supervise the mother with the children. Both parents also needed to complete the parenting sessions with the social worker and ensure that both children were safe [REDACTED].

[REDACTED]

No criminal charges have been filed against the mother by the Pennsylvania State Police. [REDACTED] began providing in-home services to the family in November of 2010. This referral was made by the agency as the services of the agency social worker concluded and the parents and both children were preparing to move to a home of their own. The safety plan requiring the mother to have only supervised contact with the children was lifted in January of 2011 as a result of the mother's participation in services and cooperation with the agency.

Services to Children and Families:

The child is receiving on-going monitoring of his medical treatment. [REDACTED]

A social worker from Cambria County Children and Youth Services began visiting the home weekly on April 30, 2010 to provide parenting services in addition to the regular agency caseworker contacts. A Family Group Decision Making Meeting was held on June 19, 2010. Upon completion of the parenting services, Independent Family Services began providing services to the family in November 2010 to present.

County Strengths and Deficiencies as identified by the County's Near Fatality Report:

The Near Fatality Team met on May 14, 2010. In attendance for the meeting were representatives of Cambria County Children and Youth Services (CYS), medical professionals, Mental Health/Mental Retardation (MHMR), District Attorney's office, Head Start, Service Providers and OCYF Program Representative for Cambria CYC. The team was very complimentary of the thorough investigation being conducted by the caseworker and supervisor. Medical, daycare, EMS and law enforcement records were obtained in addition to multiple interviews with family, neighbors, and various professionals that could possibly provide information regarding the investigation. The agency caseworker and supervisor were very pro-active in obtaining services for the family.

County Recommendations for changes at the Local Levels as identified by Fatality Report:

None

Recommendations for changes at the State Level:

None

CERO Findings:

The agency completed interviews and obtained records as required. The agency provided appropriate services to the family and ensured the safety of both children in the home.

Statutory and Regulatory Compliance issues:

None