



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

**OFFICE OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES**

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**REPORT ON THE DEATH OF**

**Taysia Jarmuzek**

**Date of Birth: August 16, 1995**

**Date of Fatality Incident: November 25, 2011**

**The family was known to  
Dauphin County Social Services for Children and Youth**

**Date of Report: May 24, 2012**

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 child near-fatality as a result of suspected child abuse. DPW must conduct child fatality and near fatality review and provide a written report on any child fatality or near fatality where child abuse is suspected.<sup>1</sup>

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. Dauphin County has convened a review team on 12/09/2011 in accordance with Act 33 of 2008 related to this report.

**Family Constellation**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Date of Birth</u>
Taysia Jarmuzek	Victim Child	08/15/1995 (Died 11/25/2011)
[REDACTED]	Mother	[REDACTED] 1975
[REDACTED]	Father	[REDACTED] 1976 (Died [REDACTED] 2011)
[REDACTED]	Brother #1	[REDACTED] 1997
[REDACTED]	Brother #2	[REDACTED] 1993

**Notification of Fatality/Near Fatality**

On the evening of November 25, 2011 father fatally shot his daughter and then himself at the family home. Victim child's' mother was home at the time of the shooting and called police. The report was registered [REDACTED] on November 28, 2011.

**Summary of DPW Child (Near) Fatality Review Activities**

Summary of Services to the Family

*Children and Youth involvement prior to Incident:*

June 8, 2005: [REDACTED] report that parents used a zip-tie to restrain Brother #2, then age 8, when he misbehaved. Child had no injuries. Investigation was closed June 22, 2005. Brother #2 continued getting [REDACTED] services which had been initiated when he was two years old.

September 29, 2009: [REDACTED] report alleged that mother hit Brother #2 in the face. Child had no injuries. All family members were interviewed and caseworker contacted [REDACTED]. There was no evidence supporting the allegation. Brother #2 had

<sup>1</sup> 23 Pa, C,S, § 6343(c)1,2.

been violent toward parents, including threatening father with a knife. [REDACTED] services, continued. Safety assessments were completed on October 4, 2009 and November 23, 2009 and no threats were identified. Case was closed [REDACTED] on November 23, 2009.

*May 5, 2010:* Anonymous referral that there is "a lot of swearing and yelling from parents". Response to referral is not documented.

*April 12, 2011:* [REDACTED] alleging that Brother #2, nearly 14 years old, had scratches on his neck and a bruise on his cheek. Brother #2 alleged to referral source that father choked him when trying to get him to go to bed [REDACTED] caseworker. Family members were interviewed separately. Everyone denied that Brother #2 was choked. Safety assessments were completed on April 15, 2011 and May 19, 2011. No safety threats were identified. [REDACTED] Case was not open for ongoing services.

*July 11, 2011:* Referral per established [REDACTED] protocol. Brother #2, age 14, was in [REDACTED] care with [REDACTED] on charges that he had instigated a riot at a [REDACTED] facility. Several staff and a state trooper sustained injuries in the riot. When he returned home from the facility he got into a physical conflict with his 18-year-old brother and was moved [REDACTED] to a shelter, where the caseworker interviewed him. Multiple attempts were made to reach the family by phone, letter and announced and unannounced visits to the family home. They were unavailable and did not respond to the agency's request for contact. Brother #2 was scheduled to go to a [REDACTED] facility on July 14, 2011. A closing letter was sent to the family on August 18, 2011. This is consistent with the [REDACTED] protocol which offers voluntary services to families whose children are involved with [REDACTED] even when no child welfare concerns are identified.

#### Circumstances of Child's Near Fatality and Related Case Activity

On November 25, 2011 at approximately 9:30 p.m. father shot his daughter in the head while she was in Brother #1's room on the computer. Then, after threatening to shoot his wife, he shot himself in the doorway of the master bedroom. Mother called 911.

[REDACTED] commenced on November 28, 2011 when the state inquired whether [REDACTED]. Caseworker immediately contacted the District Attorney's office and local police and gathered information regarding the incident. Brother #2, placed out-of-home through [REDACTED], was located and interviewed in order to assure his safety. He had been returned to the area in order to attend the funerals and then returned to the placement facility. Caseworker interviewed mother on December 6, 2011 in collaboration with local police. A home visit occurred on December 7, 2011 at which time caseworker spoke briefly with Brother #1.

The victim child and her older brother were successful teenagers. Both were honor roll students and the older brother attends post-secondary education. The younger brother had serious [REDACTED] issues from very early childhood. Most recently he was [REDACTED] was placed [REDACTED] out of the area.

[REDACTED]

More recently parents had a marital conflict. Thanksgiving Day, the day prior to the shooting, father made threats to mother that he would kill their daughter. The shooting occurred on the parents wedding anniversary. Father had made statements that he wanted his wife to "suffer." It is presumed that killing the daughter resulted from this wish. Father had legally purchased the firearm about five years ago.

**Current/Most Recent Status of Case**

[REDACTED] No criminal charges were filed [REDACTED] is deceased. The younger son [REDACTED] receives [REDACTED] services in a [REDACTED] facility. Brother #1 is an adult. Mother identified sufficient family and community supports. She declined a referral for [REDACTED]. The case was closed effective December 9, 2011 [REDACTED].

**County Strengths and Deficiencies as Identified by the County's Fatality Report**

County Strengths:

County Weaknesses

- Police who were investigating the incident did not notify the DA's office or Dauphin County C&Y that a child had died [REDACTED].
- Dauphin County C&Y does not have a protocol for dealing with reports of this nature. The requirements of the [REDACTED] law for interviews and home visits within specified time frames are disruptive/invasive when a family is grieving a tragedy.

**County Recommendations for Changes at the Local (County or State) Levels as Identified in County's Fatality Report**

- The coroner's office is considering a "death notification protocol" to assure that necessary notification occurs.
- Children & youth is contacting other CYS agencies to determine whether there are procedures for response to murder/suicide reports.

**Department of Public Welfare Findings**

County Strengths

- Once the report was made, the county acted quickly to investigate.
- The CYS caseworker and police cooperated to minimize the need for multiple interviews with mother.

- There was a sensitive and prompt response from [REDACTED], who assured that Brother #2 was able to attend funeral services for his father and sister.

#### County Weaknesses

At the time of the incident neither police nor the coroner's office made a report of child abuse.

#### Statutory and Regulatory Compliance Issues

None.