

<b>Preliminary Report</b>	<b>Fatality</b>	<b>05/21/2024</b>
---------------------------	-----------------	-------------------

- 1. Victim:** Brayden Butcher – 8-year-old male
- 2. Date of notification to DCS:** 08/12/22
- 3. Date of fatality:** 08/12/22
- 4. Date of determination that the fatality was the result of abuse or neglect\*:** 05/15/24
- 5. County and general location of the residence of the victim:** Pima County – Tucson, AZ
- 6. Alleged perpetrator(s) name, age and city, town or general location:**

Joshua A. Butcher – age 30 – Tucson, AZ  
Mercedes M. Caho – age 27 – Tucson, AZ

**7. Circumstances of the fatality that indicate it was the result of abuse or neglect:**

On August 12, 2022, the Department of Child Safety received a report regarding 8-year-old Brayden Butcher, who was brought to an emergency center and lost consciousness while in the waiting room. He was transported to a hospital where he was ultimately pronounced deceased. Upon examination, multiple injuries were discovered, including fractures. On April 24, 2024, the parents, Joshua A. Butcher and Mercedes M. Caho, were each indicted on one count of first-degree murder and four counts of child abuse in relation to Brayden’s death.

**8. Whether DCS has received any reports or past cases, of child abuse, abandonment or neglect involving the child or the current alleged perpetrator(s)\*\*:**

DCS received the following prior reports involving Ms. Caho, Mr. Butcher and/or Brayden Butcher:

On February 9, 2012, a report was received alleging neglect to a child by Ms. Caho. The allegation was unsubstantiated. The family declined daycare assistance and the case was closed on May 9, 2013.

On December 15, 2018, a report was received alleging neglect to Brayden and a sibling by Ms. Caho and Mr. Butcher. The allegations were unsubstantiated. There were no services provided and the case was closed on April 2, 2019.

On November 26, 2019, a report was received alleging neglect to Brayden by Ms. Caho and Mr. Butcher. The allegations were unsubstantiated. There were no services provided and the case was closed on December 13, 2019.

On April 30, 2020, a report was received alleging neglect to Brayden and his siblings by Ms. Caho, another adult and Mr. Butcher. The investigation resulted in the children coming into DCS custody. A dependency petition was filed in Pima County Superior Court. Services were provided to the family. The allegations as to the parents were substantiated. The parents successfully reunified with the children and the dependency was dismissed in September 2021. The case was closed on October 12, 2021.

On February 16, 2022, a report was received alleging neglect to Brayden and his siblings by Mr. Butcher. The allegations were unsubstantiated. There were no services provided and the case was closed on March 11, 2022.

On May 10, 2022, a report was received alleging neglect to Brayden and his siblings by Ms. Caho and Mr. Butcher. The investigation was pending investigation when the fatality occurred. The children came into DCS custody and the dependency matter is ongoing.

**9. Actions taken by DCS in response to the fatality:**

A joint investigation was conducted with the Pima County Sheriff's Office.

**10. Actions taken regarding the child and/or other children in the home:**

Following an assessment of child safety, the other children in the home were placed with a relative.

**11. Whether the agency is or intends to provide direct services or service referrals to the family:**

The Department is providing services to the family.

\*The determination that a fatality or near fatality is the result of abuse, abandonment or neglect is based one or more of the following criteria: (1) The perpetrator(s) arrest related to the incident, (2) Substantiated finding(s) linking the alleged perpetrator(s) action(s) to the fatality or near fatality and/or (3) Results of the Medical Examiner's report.

\*\* Information released after July 3, 2015 provides reports, or any current or past cases, of abuse, abandonment or neglect involving the child or the alleged perpetrator pursuant to A.R.S. § 8-807.01(A)(1)(e).  
Posted information may be updated as new information becomes available.