

Preliminary Report	Near Fatality	12/12/2024
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1. Near Fatality Victim: 5-year-old female

2. Date of notification to DCS: 7/1/2024

3. Date of near fatality: 7/1/2024

4. Date of determination that the near fatality was the result of abuse or neglect*:
12/4/2024

5. County and general location of the residence of the victim: Pima County – Phoenix, AZ

6. Alleged perpetrator(s) name, age and city, town or general location:

Veronica Leon – age 25 – Tucson, AZ

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

On July 1, 2024, the Department of Child Safety received a report regarding a 5-year-old female child and their sibling, who had been involved in a wrong way motor vehicle crash and were not properly restrained. Upon examination, the child was found to be in serious condition when she sustained injuries requiring intubation and intensive care. The near-fatality victim and their sibling were in the care of their mother, Veronica Leon, when the accident occurred. On August 5, 2024, Veronica Leon was indicted on multiple charges including child abuse, endangerment and aggravated driving while under the influence of liquor. On November 22, 2024, Veronica Leon pleaded guilty to one count of aggravated driving while under the influence of liquor, two counts of endangerment, and one count of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon.

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 Veronica Leon and the near-fatality victim:

On August 13, 2020, the Department of Child Safety received a report alleging neglect to the near-fatality victim and their sibling by another adult and their mother, Veronica Leon. The allegation was unsubstantiated. The mother declined voluntary in-home services offered by the Department and the case was closed on September 16, 2020.

On December 1, 2020, the Department of Child Safety received a report alleging neglect to the near-fatality victim and their sibling by her father and mother, Veronica Leon. The allegation was unsubstantiated. The Department referred the family to voluntary in-home services and the DCS investigation was closed on January 7, 2021.

On February 23, 2021, the Department of Child Safety received a report alleging neglect to the near-fatality victim and their sibling by her father and mother, Veronica Leon. The allegation was unsubstantiated. The family was still receiving in-home services at the time of this report. The Department recommended the parents to continue with these services and the case was closed on April 5, 2021.

On March 20, 2021, the Department of Child Safety received a report alleging neglect and physical abuse to the near-fatality victim and their sibling by her father and mother, Veronica Leon. The allegation of neglect was substantiated and the children were removed from the home. The Department filed a dependency petition with the Pima County Superior Court and provided services to the family.

On November 5, 2021, the Department of Child Safety received a report alleging neglect to the near-fatality victim and their sibling by their mother, Veronica Leon. The allegation of neglect was substantiated. A subsequent report was received prior to the closure of this investigation.

On January 13, 2022, the Department of Child Safety received a report alleging neglect and physical abuse to the near-fatality victim and their sibling by her father and mother, Veronica Leon. The allegations were unsubstantiated and the family was still receiving services through their ongoing Dependency with the Department. The near-fatality victim and their sibling were returned to their mother's care and the case was dismissed on October 14, 2022.

9. Actions taken by DCS in response to the near 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:

Upon release from the hospital, the near-fatality victim and their sibling were assessed as safe in the care of their other parent.

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

The Department provided the family with information on services available in the community.

*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.