

Preliminary Report	Near Fatality	07/03/2024
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Amendments to the information originally posted on 5/13/2024 are displayed below in red.

- Near Fatality Victim:** 4-year-old male
- Date of notification to DCS:** 3/20/2024
- Date of near fatality:** 3/20/2024
- Date of determination that the near fatality was the result of abuse or neglect*:**
Laquasha Sebastian- 5/8/2024
Kevin Rhymes- 6/26/2024
- County and general location of the residence of the victim:** Maricopa County – Glendale, AZ
- Alleged perpetrator(s) name, age and city, town or general location:**
Laquasha Sebastian – age 31 – Glendale, AZ
Kevin Rhymes- age 44 – Glendale, AZ
- Circumstances of the near fatality that indicate it was the result of abuse or neglect:**

On March 30, 2024, the Department of Child Safety received a report regarding a 4-year-old child who was taken to the hospital after sustaining an accidental gunshot wound to the chest. Upon examination, the child was determined to be in serious condition. On March 27, 2024, Laquasha Sebastian was indicted by a Maricopa County grand jury with one count of child abuse. **On March 28, 2024, the Department filed a dependency petition with the Maricopa County Superior Court. On June 4, 2024, the court found the child dependent as to the father, Kevin Rhymes.**

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 report involving Laquasha Sebastian and the near fatality victim:

On May 1, 2023, a report was received alleging neglect to the near fatality victim by his father, **Kevin Rhymes**, and significant other, Laquasha Sebastian. The allegations of neglect were unsubstantiated as to both caregivers. No services were offered to the family and the case was closed on May 26, 2023.

DCS received the following prior reports involving **Kevin Rhymes** and near fatality victim:

On January 20, 2016, a report was received alleging neglect toward children by the father, Kevin Rhymes, and another adult. The allegations of neglect were unsubstantiated as to both caregivers. No services were offered to the family and the case was closed.

On July 14, 2017, a report was received alleging neglect toward children by the father, Kevin Rhymes, and another adult. The allegations of neglect were substantiated and a dependency petition was filed. The Department provided the family with reunification services. The children were returned back to the other adult and the dependency case closed in June 2018.

On July 13, 2018, a report was received alleging physical abuse to a child by the father, Kevin Rhymes. The allegations of physical abuse were unsubstantiated. No services were offered and the case was closed on July 31, 2018.

On December 31, 2018, a report was received alleging neglect towards a child by the father, Kevin Rhymes, and another adult. The allegations of neglect were substantiated against the father, Kevin Rhymes. The child was assessed as safe with their parent. A list of community resources was offered to the family and the case was closed on March 15, 2019.

On June 15, 2020, a report was received alleging neglect and physical abuse towards a child by the father, Kevin Rhymes. The allegations of neglect and physical abuse were unsubstantiated. No services were offered to the family and the case closed out on September 27, 2020.

On October 16, 2021, a report was received alleging neglect to the near fatality victim and sibling against their mother. The allegations of neglect were unsubstantiated to the mother. Daycare services were provided to the family and the case was closed on November 23, 2021.

On December 20, 2021, a report was received alleging neglect to the near fatality victim and sibling against their parents. The allegation of neglect was substantiated to the mother. The children were taken into DCS custody and an out of home dependency petition was filed. On March 28, 2022, the near fatality victim was assessed as safe with his father, Kevin Rhymes, and the dependency was dismissed.

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

A joint investigation was conducted with the Glendale Police Department.

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

Following an assessment of child safety, the other child in the home was assessed as safe with their mother. Upon release from the hospital, the near fatality victim was removed and 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.

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** 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.

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