



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT of CHILD SAFETY

David Lujan, Cabinet Executive Officer/Executive Deputy Director
Katie Hobbs, Governor

Preliminary Report	Near Fatality	03/13/2024
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1. Near Fatality Victim: 11-year-old male

2. Date of notification to DCS: 02/05/23

3. Date of near fatality: 02/05/23

4. Date of determination that the near fatality was the result of abuse or neglect*:
02/16/24

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

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

Donald Cryer – age 54 – Phoenix, AZ
Douglas Fowlkes – age 33 – Phoenix, AZ
Cherish Fowlkes – age 30 – Phoenix, AZ

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

On February 5, 2023, the Department of Child Safety received a report regarding an 11-year-old child who was taken to the hospital after sustaining an accidental gunshot wound. Upon examination, the child was determined to be in critical condition. On February 16, 2024, the Department substantiated allegations of neglect to the near fatality victim by his legal guardian, Donald Cryer, and parents Douglas and Cherish Fowlkes.

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):**

There were no prior DCS reports involving Donald Cryer.

DCS received the following prior reports involving Cherish Fowlkes, Douglas Fowlkes and the near fatality victim:

On January 21, 2013, report was received alleging neglect to children by Cherish Fowlkes. The allegation was unsubstantiated. There were no services provided to the family and the case was closed on January 28, 2014.

On August 18, 2013, report was received alleging neglect to a child their mother, Cherish Fowlkes. The investigation assessed the baby as safe and the allegation was unsubstantiated. There were no services provided to the family and the case was closed on December 4, 2013.

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On January 1, 2014, a report was received alleging neglect to a child by their mother, Cherish Fowlkes. The allegation of neglect was substantiated. The family declined services offered by the Department. The case was closed on February 14, 2014.

On December 21, 2016, a report was received alleging physical abuse to the near fatality victim by the father, Douglas Fowlkes, and physical abuse by the mother, Cherish Fowlkes, to a sibling. The family was provided with community resources. The allegations were unsubstantiated and the case was closed on January 27, 2017.

On September 23, 2018, a report was received alleging neglect to a child by their mother, Cherish Fowlkes. The child was assessed as safe with their father. The allegation was substantiated. The Department provided services to the family and the case was closed.

On September 29, 2019, a report was received alleging physical abuse and neglect to a child by their mother, Cherish Fowlkes. This investigation was open when the next report was received. Ultimately, the allegations were unsubstantiated.

On February 20, 2020, a report was received alleging neglect to a child by their mother, Cherish Fowlkes. The investigation resulted in the child coming into DCS custody. A dependency petition was filed with the Maricopa County Juvenile Court and the Department was providing services to the family when a subsequent report was received. This child was reunified with their father on June 1, 2020.

On May 6, 2020, a report was received alleging neglect to the near fatality victim and his siblings by their mother, Cherish Fowlkes, and their father, Douglas Fowlkes. The allegations of neglect were substantiated. The investigation was open when the next report was received.

On June 16, 2020, a report was received alleging neglect to the near fatality victim and sibling by their mother, Cherish Fowlkes, and their father, Douglas Fowlkes. The allegations of neglect were substantiated. The investigation resulted in the children coming into DCS custody. A dependency petition was filed with the Maricopa County Juvenile Court. Services were provided to the family. Ultimately, the dependency was dismissed with a sibling being reunified with their father. The near fatality victim and a sibling were placed under a permanent guardianship with maternal uncle, Donald Cryer. The case was closed on 12/27/21.

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

A joint investigation was conducted with the Phoenix 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 the legal guardian. Upon release from the hospital, the near fatality victim was also assessed as safe with the legal guardian.

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.