

Preliminary Report	Near Fatality	04/11/2025
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1. Near Fatality Victim: 1-year-old female

2. Date of notification to DCS: 05/19/23

3. Date of near fatality: 05/19/23

4. Date of determination that the near fatality was the result of abuse or neglect*:
04/08/25

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:

Alexis Mertens – age 25 – Phoenix, AZ

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

On May 19, 2023, the Department of Child Safety received a report regarding a 1-year-old child who was transported to the hospital after being found unresponsive. Upon examination, the child was determined to be in critical condition due to ingesting fentanyl. On July 19, 2023, the Department filed a dependency petition with the Maricopa County Superior Court alleging neglect to the near fatality victim by her mother, Alexis Mertens. On September 29, 2023 the mother pleaded no contest to the allegations.

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 Alexis Mertens and the near fatality victim:

On July 10, 2021, a report was received alleging neglect to the child by her mother, Alexis Mertens. After an investigation, the baby was assessed as safe with her mother and the allegation was unsubstantiated. The mother declined voluntary in-home services offered by the Department and the case was closed on September 29, 2021.

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:

Upon release from the hospital, the near fatality victim was discharged home with an in-home safety plan that included a relative supervising contact between the mother and child. Subsequently, the child was taken into DCS custody. She was placed in a licensed foster home until

she transitioned to placement with a relative out of state. There were no other children in the home.

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

The Department is providing services to the child.

*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.