



<b>Summary Report</b>	<b>Fatality</b>	<b>6/16/16</b>
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**1. Victim:** Jason Hester – 6-year-old male

**2. Was the child residing in the child's home or in an out-of-home placement at the time of the fatality?**

The child was residing in his home when the following incident occurred:

On June 22, 2015, the Department of Child Safety received a report regarding 6-year-old Jason Hester who was found unresponsive in the home where he lived with his aunt, Lillian Hester and her boyfriend, Jason Conlee. Jason was transported to the Flagstaff Medical Center where he was pronounced deceased. According to the Coconino County Office of the Medical Examiner, Jason weighed only 29 pounds and showed evidence of neglect including dehydration and numerous bruises and abrasions in various stages of healing. On June 6, 2016, Lillian Hester was charged with child abuse and first-degree murder. Jason Conlee was charged with child abuse and negligent homicide.

**3. If the victim in the Preliminary Report involved a child residing in the child's home, the following information will be provided:**

**a. Services being provided to the child, a member of the child's family or the person suspected of the abuse or neglect at the time of the incident and the date of the last contact before the incident between the entity providing services and the person receiving services:**

No services were being provided to the family by the Department of Child Safety at the time of the incident.

**b. Was the child, a member of the child's family or the person suspected of the abuse or neglect the subject of a report for investigation at the time of the incident?**

No.

**c. All involvement of the child's parents and of the person suspected of the abuse or neglect in a situation for which a report for investigation was made or in services provided pursuant to this chapter in the five years preceding the incident:**

At the time of the fatality, there was no prior involvement of the child's parents, Lillian Hester or Jason Conlee with DCS.

**d. Any investigation pursuant to a report for investigation concerning the child, a member of the child's family or the person suspected of the abuse or neglect or services provided to the child or the child's family since the date of the incident involving the fatality:**

The investigation of the fatality report resulted in the removal of the other children in the home. The Department filed dependency petitions with the Coconino County Superior Court and is providing services.



Subsequent reports were received on November 8 and 25, 2015 alleging abuse or neglect to three of the children removed from the home. These reports were investigated and the allegations were unsubstantiated. A third report was received January 12, 2016 alleging neglect to a child by Lillian Hester and Jason Conlee. The investigation of this report resulted in the child being placed in foster care and the allegations were proposed for substantiation. The Department filed dependency petitions and services are being provided.

**4. If the victim in the Preliminary Report involved a child residing in an out-of-home placement, the following information will be provided:**

**a. Licensing Agency:**

N/A

**b. Licensing history of the out-of-home placement, including the type of license held by the operator of the placement and the period for which the placement has been licensed:**

N/A

**c. Summary of all violations by the licensee:**

N/A

**d. Any other actions by the licensee or an employee of the licensee that constitute a substantial failure to protect and promote the health, safety and welfare of a child.**

N/A

**5. Actions taken by the Department in response to the case including any changes to policy or practice and/or recommendations for further changes in policies, practices, rules or statutes:**

The Department conducted a joint investigation with the Coconino County Sheriff's Office. The other children residing in the home were removed and placed in foster care. The Department filed dependency petitions with the Coconino County Superior Court and is providing services. Subsequent reports received on November 8 and 15, 2015 were investigated and the allegations were unsubstantiated. A third report received on January 12, 2016 alleged neglect to a child by Lillian Hester and Jason Conlee. The investigation resulted in the placement of the child in foster care. The Department filed dependency petitions and is providing services.

Additionally, in accordance with the DCS Strategic Plan for State Fiscal Year 2016 (FY16), multidisciplinary team (MDT) reviews of fatality and near fatality cases were implemented during the first quarter of FY16. The MDT reviews of fatality and near fatality cases, especially those with prior DCS involvement, are a key feature of the Strategic Plan and support the objective of increasing the accuracy of safety and risk assessments in investigations.

This case was reviewed by the MDT in order to identify any systemic factors, both internal and external to the Department that may have had an impact. The Department is using the aggregate data gathered through all of the MDT reviews to assess and guide future changes and/or recommendations to policies, practices, rules or statutes. Findings from these reviews will be compiled into an annual report to be shared on the DCS website. The target date for release of this report is September 1, 2016.



*Arizona Department of Child Safety*

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**Douglas A. Ducey**  
Governor

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Director

For more information regarding the Department of Child Safety's Strategic Plan for State Fiscal Year 2016, please visit the DCS website at: <https://dcs.az.gov/news/dcs-strategic-plan>.