

Summary Report	Fatality	01/16/2025
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1. Victim: Estrella Wools – 4-month-old female

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 her foster home when the following incident occurred:

On February 1, 2022, the Department of Child Safety received a report regarding 4-month-old, Estrella Wools, who was found unresponsive on the couch after being left with a propped bottle by other adult, Antania Surakus. Estrella was transported to the hospital where she was later pronounced deceased. On December 18, 2024, the Department substantiated the allegation of neglect to Estrella by Antania Surakus.

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:

The Department was providing services to the family as a dependency petition had been filed in response to a prior report received on October 8, 2021. The child was residing in a licensed foster home when the fatality report was received. The last date of contact between the Department and the foster home was on January 26, 2022.

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?

Estrella Wools and her parents were subjects of the October 8, 2021 report.

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:

There were no prior DCS reports involving the foster parent.

The other adult, Antania Surakus, was involved in the following prior report:

On August 17, 2017, a report was received alleging neglect to a child by Antania Surkas. The investigation did not find evidence to support the allegation. The allegation was unsubstantiated. The family was provided with information on services available in the community and the case was closed.

Estrella's mother was involved in the following previous reports:

On March 21, 2012, a report was received alleging neglect to three children by their mother. An investigation was initiated and efforts were made to locate the family without success. The case was closed on July 13, 2012.

On February 26, 2014, a report was received alleging neglect to three children by their mother. Following an assessment of child safety, the children were removed and a dependency petition was filed with the Maricopa County Superior Court. Services were provided to the family. The allegations of neglect were substantiated. The mother's parental rights were ultimately terminated to these children on April 22, 2015.

On July 5, 2020, a report was received alleging neglect to a child by their mother. Following an assessment of child safety, the child was removed and a dependency petition was filed with the Maricopa County Superior Court. Services were provided to the family and the allegation of neglect to the child was substantiated. A permanent guardianship was granted by the court and the child was assessed as safe in the legal guardian's care. The dependency was dismissed on August 10, 2020.

On May 3, 2021, a report was received alleging neglect to a child by their mother. The investigation did not find evidence to support the allegations. The child was assessed as safe in the care of their legal guardian and no services were provided by the Department. The allegation was unsubstantiated and the case was closed on May 21, 2021.

On October 8, 2021, a report was received alleging neglect to Estrella by her mother. Following an assessment of child safety, Estrella was placed in foster care and a dependency petition was filed with the Maricopa County Superior Court on October 14, 2021. The Department was providing services to the family when the fatality report was received.

Estrella's alleged father was involved in the following prior report:

On April 15, 2013, a report was received alleging sexual abuse to a child by Estrella's alleged father. The investigation did not find evidence to support the allegations. The child was assessed as safe in their parents' care and the family was provided with information on services available in the community. The allegation was unsubstantiated and the case was closed on March 13, 2014.

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 another foster child in the home being removed and placed with another foster care provider. Following an assessment of child safety, the other children who reside in the home were assessed as safe. The allegation of neglect pertaining to Antania Surkas has been substantiated.

A subsequent report involving another child in the home was received on March 7, 2022, regarding allegations of neglect to the child by their mother. The allegation was unsubstantiated and the child was assessed as safe in the care of their other parent.

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:

Intermountain Ctr Human Dev

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:

A family foster home license with La Paloma Family Services was active from 10/20/13-11/14/14.

A family foster home license with Intermountain Ctr Human Dev was active from 3/29/19-3/14/22.

c. Summary of all violations by the licensee:

None.

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.

None.

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 Sahuarita Police Department. The investigation of the fatality report resulted in another foster child in the home being removed and placed with another foster care provider. Following an assessment of child safety, the other children who reside in the home were assessed as safe. The allegation of neglect pertaining to Antania Surkas has been substantiated.

A subsequent report involving another child in the home was received on March 7, 2022, regarding allegations of neglect to the child by their mother. The allegation was unsubstantiated and the child was assessed as safe in the care of their other parent.

The Department reminds all caregivers to practice safe sleep. For additional information please visit the DCS website at: <https://dcs.az.gov/Services/Safe-Sleep>.

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 fatality and near fatality cases with prior DCS involvement, which are a key feature of the Strategic Plan and supports the objective of increasing the accuracy of safety and risk assessments in investigations.

Cases are 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 uses 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 are compiled into an annual report to be shared on the DCS website. The target date for release of the next report is December 1, 2025.