



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT of CHILD SAFETY

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

Summary Report	Fatality	02/22/2024
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1. Victim: Kingston Hecht – 6-month-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 an unlicensed relative's home when the following incident occurred:

On December 27, 2018, the Department of Child Safety received a report regarding 6-month-old Kingston Hecht, who was found unresponsive at home and was transported to the hospital. Upon examination, Kingston was found to have significant head injuries. On January 2, 2019, Kingston Hecht passed away as result of his injuries. Kingston was in DCS custody at the time of this incident under the care of a relative caregiver, Ralph Lewis. On September 29, 2021, Ralph Lewis was indicted by a grand jury in the United States District Court for the District of Arizona for involuntary manslaughter and child abuse.

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 due to an open dependency matter with the Pima County Superior Court. The child was residing in a relative's home when the fatality report was received. The last date of in-person contact between the Department and Kingston's family was on December 14, 2018.

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?

The child, his sibling, and their parents were subjects of the July 30, 2018 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 Ralph Lewis.

The child's parents were involved in the following:

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On July 30, 2018, a report was received alleging neglect to Kingston and a sibling by their parents. Following an assessment of child safety, Kingston and the sibling were placed with separate relatives. A dependency petition was filed with the Pima County Juvenile Court and the allegations were substantiated. The Department was providing services to the family when the fatality report was received.

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 report regarding the fatality was investigated and resulted in the child's relative caregiver, Ralph Lewis, being indicted by a grand jury for involuntary manslaughter and child abuse. The other children in the caregiver's home had their safety assessed by the Tohono O'odham Child Welfare Division. The Department continued to provide services and supports to the child's parents and sibling for the open dependency case. The allegation of neglect to Kingston by relative, Ralph Lewis, was substantiated. The case involving the fatality incident was closed on January 5, 2022.

A subsequent report of neglect to a sibling by Kingston's mother and another adult was received on July 27, 2020. The child was assessed as safe in out of home care. The allegation of neglect to the sibling were substantiated and the Department provided services to the family.

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 Tohono O'odham Nation Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The investigation resulted in the

child's relative caregiver, Ralph Lewis, being indicted by a grand jury for involuntary manslaughter and child abuse. The other children in the caregiver's home had their safety assessed by the Tohono O'odham Child Welfare Division. The Department continued to provide services and supports to the child's parents and sibling for the open dependency case. The allegation of neglect to Kingston by relative, Ralph Lewis, was substantiated. The case involving the fatality incident was closed on January 5, 2022.

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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, 2024.