



Summary Report	Near Fatality	06/02/2023
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1. Victim: 3-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 near fatality?

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

On June 20, 2021, the Department of Child Safety received a report regarding the near drowning of a 3-year-old male. Upon examination, the child was found to be in critical condition. The child was under the care of his parents, Cassandra Armstead and Montez Bowers, as well as another adult, Megan Morris. The child was left unsupervised at the time of the near drowning. A dependency petition was filed with the Pima County Superior Court and on October 12, 2021, the court found the dependency as to both parents. Additionally, on April 12, 2023, the Department substantiated the allegation of neglect to the child by Megan Morris.

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:

There were no services 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:

The child's mother, Cassandra Armstead, and/or the child's father, Montez Bowers, were involved in the following prior reports:

On June 12, 2018, report was received alleging neglect to the near fatality victim and his siblings by Ms. Armstead and Mr. Bowers. The allegations were unsubstantiated and the case was closed on June 27, 2018. The report was open when the next report was received.

On June 18, 2018, report was received alleging neglect to the near fatality victim and his siblings by Ms. Armstead and Mr. Bowers. The allegations were unsubstantiated and the case was closed on June 27, 2018. The family was provided with daycare and community services.

On January 11, 2019, report was received alleging neglect to the near fatality victim by his mother, Cassandra Armstead. The allegations were unsubstantiated and the case was closed on March 1, 2019. There were no services provided to the family.

On May 10, 2019, report was received alleging neglect to a sibling by his mother, Cassandra Armstead. The allegations were unsubstantiated and the case was closed on July 5, 2019. The family was provided with daycare and community services.

On July 20, 2019, report was received alleging neglect to the near fatality victim and his siblings by his mother, Cassandra Armstead. The allegations were unsubstantiated and the case was closed on September 27, 2019. The family was provided with community services.

On April 17, 2021, report was received alleging neglect to the near fatality victim and his siblings by Ms. Armstead and Mr. Bowers. The allegations were unsubstantiated and the case was closed on June 17, 2021. The family was offered community services.

DCS received no prior reports involving Ms. Morris.

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 near fatality:

The investigation of the near fatality report resulted in the children being removed and placed in foster care. A dependency petition was filed with the Pima County Superior Court and on October 12, 2021, the court found the dependency as to both parents. Additionally, on April 12, 2023, the Department substantiated the allegation of neglect to the child by Megan Morris. The Department is providing services to the family.

A subsequent report involving the near fatality victim and his siblings was received on December 21, 2021 regarding allegations of abuse or neglect that occurred prior to the children coming into care. While the report was open an additional subsequent report was received on January 3, 2022. The report also alleged abuse that occurred prior to the children coming into care. The allegations as to both reports were unsubstantiated.

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 Tucson Police Department. The children were removed and placed in foster care. A dependency petition was filed with the Pima County Superior Court and on October 12, 2021, the court found the dependency as to both parents. Additionally, on April 12, 2023, the Department substantiated the allegation of neglect to the child by Megan Morris. The Department is providing services to the family.

A subsequent report involving the near fatality victim and his siblings was received on December 21, 2021 regarding allegations of abuse or neglect that occurred prior to the children coming into care. While the report was open an additional subsequent report was received on January 3, 2022. The report also alleged abuse that occurred prior to the children coming into care. The allegations as to both reports were unsubstantiated.

The Department reminds all caregivers to always watch children around water and follow the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) Pool Safety Recommendations.

For more information, please visit the ADHS website at:

http://www.azdhs.gov/phs/oeh/pool_rules.htm.

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, 2023.