



<b>Summary Report</b>	<b>Fatality</b>	<b>4/6/16</b>
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**1. Victim:** Carter Lott – 14 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 his home when the following incident occurred:

On August 22, 2015, the Department of Child Safety received a report regarding emergency services responding to a possible drowning of a child. The child was taken to the hospital where he later died. The child was in the care of his mother at the time of the drowning. The Department substantiated the allegation of neglect as to the child's mother, Kristi Heffelfinger, as she did not provide adequate supervision to Carter when he gained access to the pool, fell in, and drowned.

**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:**

DCS has received the following prior report involving the mother Kristi Heffelfinger:

On September 12, 2012, a report was received alleging neglect to the fatality victim's sibling by the mother, Kristi Heffelfinger. The Department made multiple attempts to locate the family. The family was unable to be located and the case was closed.

**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 Department substantiated the allegation of neglect as to the child's mother, Kristi Heffelfinger, as she did not provide adequate supervision to Carter when he gained access to the pool, fell in, and drowned. Following an assessment of child safety, the siblings in the home were assessed as safe.



A subsequent report was received on February 8, 2016 alleging neglect to the fatality victim's siblings by their mother, Kristi Heffelfinger. The children were seen on February 9, 2016 and were determined to be safe in the care of their mother. The Department provided the family with information on services available in the community. The case remains open pending necessary documentation.

**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 Peoria Police Department. The Department substantiated the allegation of neglect as to the child's mother, Kristi Heffelfinger, as she did not provide adequate supervision to Carter when he gained access to the pool, fell in, and drowned. Following an assessment of child safety, the siblings were found safe in the home.

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](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 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.

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>.



*Arizona Department of Child Safety*

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