



Summary Report	Fatality	3/10/16
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1. Victim: Helious Griffith – 5-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 in the hospital when the following incident occurred:

On November 7, 2015, the Department of Child Safety received a report regarding Helious Griffith who was killed by his mother in a murder-suicide while admitted to Cardon Children's Medical Center in Mesa, AZ. Lola Tami Griffith died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound. Helious had been hospitalized at the center for approximately one week.

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:

Although no services were being provided prior to the November 7, 2015 fatality, the family was being investigated for a report dated September 24, 2015. The last date of contact between the Department and family was on November 5, 2015.

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, the mother, and the grandfather were subjects of the September 24, 2015 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:

The following reports involve Helious' mother, Lola Griffith, and/or his grandfather:

On August 24, 2011, a report was received alleging neglect to Helious by Lola Griffith due to concerns regarding his health. An investigation was initiated and was in progress when another report was received. The allegation was later unsubstantiated.

On November 28, 2011, a report was received alleging neglect to Helious by Lola Griffith due to concerns regarding his weight. The investigation was completed and assessed Helious as being safe in the care of his mother. The allegation was unsubstantiated and the case was closed.

On April 22, 2012, a report was received alleging physical abuse to Helious by Lola Griffith due to him reportedly having a dislocated shoulder. The investigation was completed and assessed Helious as being safe in the care of his mother. The allegation was unsubstantiated and the case was closed.



On September 24, 2015, a report was received alleging neglect to Helious by his grandfather and Lola Griffith due to concern regarding the condition of the home. An investigation was initiated and the case remained open when the fatality occurred.

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 allegations as to Lola Griffith being substantiated for child abuse.

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 substantiated the allegation of physical abuse to Helious by his mother, Lola Griffith. The Department also conducted a joint investigation with the Mesa Police Department.

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>.