

Statement on the fatality of a twelve-month-old girl

Issue Date: March 4, 2020

On December 18, 2019, the Department of Child Safety received a report regarding the death of a 12-month-old girl, Daniella Yslas.

Daniella was pronounced deceased after being found unresponsive in her home.

The joint DCS and Tucson Police Department investigation determined that the child had been in the care of her mother, Kianna Medina, when she died.

The investigation determined that Ms. Medina swaddled Daniella in a blanket with a knot tied at the back of Daniella's neck, which caused the edge of the blanket to press tightly against her neck. Ms. Medina then laid Daniella face-down to sleep and surrounded her with blankets and pillows. Ms. Medina then placed an approximately 5-pound memory foam pillow on Daniela's back. Ms. Medina then left Daniella alone in the room.

DCS removed Daniella's sibling from the home and place the sibling in foster care.

The other children living in the home were assessed as safe with their respective caregivers.

On January 7, 2020, the mother was indicted on charges of felony child abuse, first degree murder, and second degree murder.

The Department is currently providing services to the family.

DCS received the following prior reports involving Ms. Medina and Daniella Yslas:

On January 8, 2019, the Department received a report alleging Daniella's father and Ms. Medina neglected Daniella. According to the report, the parents failed to pick up Daniella when she was discharged from the hospital after she was born. Daniella was born prematurely and was staying in the intensive care unit. The parents stated their car had broken down and they could not make it to the hospital to pick up Daniella at the assigned discharge time. The DCS investigation did not find any evidence to remove the child. The allegation was unsubstantiated and the case was closed.

On April 29, 2019, the Department received a report alleging Daniella's father and Ms. Medina neglected Daniella and her siblings. According to the report, Daniella's infant sibling had died from asphyxia while sleeping in the same crib as her twin sibling. The Tucson Police Department and DCS jointly investigated the allegation. The Medical Examiner's Office determined the death was accidental. The police investigation did not result in any charges being filed. The DCS investigation did not find evidence to remove the other children. The Department offered the family in-home services, but they declined. The allegations were unsubstantiated and the case was closed.

A reminder to practice safe sleep

Every five days in Arizona, a baby suffocates while sleeping.

The Department urges all infant caregivers to practice safe sleep when placing a baby to sleep:

- Share a room, not a bed.
- Lay baby down to sleep in a crib or bassinet
- Don't sleep with you baby,
- Don't let your baby sleep in a crowded crib
- Place babies on their back every time the go to sleep at night and for naps
- Give babies space to breathe: no pillows, bumpers, blankets or toys