



Statement on the fatality of a 19-month-old girl

Date Issued: April 23, 2021

On May 17, 2018, the Department of Child Safety received a report regarding the death of a 19-month-old girl, Royalty Winston-Street.

Royalty arrived at the hospital in critical condition after a choking incident.

According to the report, Royalty's mother, Blondella Winston, witnessed Royalty trying to place an entire sandwich in her mouth. Ms. Winston said she briefly fell asleep and when she awoke, Royalty was choking. Ms. Winston allegedly did not attempt to stop Royalty from ingesting the entire sandwich.

On May 21, 2018, Royalty was taken off life support and passed away.

At the time of her death, Royalty and her siblings were in the process of reunifying with Ms. Winston and their father, Cory Street. Even though the children were living with their parents due to a court order, DCS maintained legal custody of the children.

After Royalty's death, DCS took physical custody of her siblings and placed them in foster care.

On June 4, 2019, the court ruled that the neglect of Royalty by Ms. Winston and Mr. Street directly led to the events that caused Royalty's death. The court terminated Ms. Winston's and Mr. Street's parental rights.

DCS has the following history with Royalty Winston-Street, Blondella Winston and Cory Street:

On July 15, 2014, the Department received a report alleging Ms. Winston neglected her children. According to the report, Ms. Winston was not providing adequate food or supervision for the children. While investigating this report, the Department received another report on July 18, 2014 alleging Ms. Winston neglected her children. According to the report, Ms. Winston was exposing her children to marijuana use in the home and not providing proper supervision. DCS found evidence to support the allegations in both reports and filed an in-home dependency petition with the Maricopa County Superior Court on August 26, 2014. The allegations on both reports were substantiated. The Department provided substance abuse services and in-home services to the family.

The in-home dependency was still open when DCS received a new report on the family. On December 14, 2014, the Department received a report alleging Ms. Winston and Mr. Street neglected their children. According to the report, Ms. Winston gave birth to twins. The twins and Ms. Winston tested positive for marijuana. In addition, the report alleged that Ms. Winston and Mr. Street were unwilling to care for the newborn twins. With the in-home

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dependency ongoing, DCS filed an out-of-home dependency on December 30, 2014, and removed the younger children in the home and placed them in foster care.

Ms. Winston and Mr. Street eventually completed their DCS services and regained custody of their children. The court dismissed the dependency on December 10, 2015, and the case was closed.

On October 15, 2016, the Department received a report alleging Ms. Winston neglected Royalty Winston-Street and her siblings. According to the report, Royalty tested positive for cocaine and marijuana at the time of her birth. The DCS investigation found evidence to support the allegations. DCS removed the younger children from the home and filed a dependency petition with the Maricopa County Superior Court on October 19, 2016.

The dependency case was still open when DCS received another report on the family. On April 3, 2017, the Department received a report alleging Ms. Winston neglected Royalty's older siblings who were still living in Ms. Winston's home. According to the report, Ms. Winston was not properly supervising the older children and was neglecting their medical needs. The DCS investigation did not find evidence to support the allegations. The allegations were unsubstantiated and the dependency case involving the younger children continued.

On February 21, 2018, the court ordered Royalty Winston and her siblings to return home to Ms. Winston by March 2, 2018. The Department was in the process of reunifying the children with Ms. Winston and Mr. Street when the fatality report was received on May 17, 2018. Royalty was in the physical custody of Ms. Winston and Mr. Street while DCS maintained legal custody. The last date of contact between DCS and the family was on May 4, 2018. The younger children living in the home were placed in foster care. The older teenage children remained living in the home.

On August 1, 2018, the Department received a report alleging Ms. Winston and Mr. Street neglected one of Royalty's siblings. According to the report, Ms. Winston gave birth to a newborn and could not properly care for the child. DCS removed the child and placed the child in a licensed foster home.

Ms. Winston's and Mr. Street's parental rights to their children were severed by the court on June 4, 2019.