

Statement on the death of a four-month-old girl

Date Issued: June 16, 2020

On October 1, 2019, the Arizona Department of Child Safety received a report regarding the death of a four-month-old girl, Samora Cousin.

Samora was found deceased after being left in an unattended vehicle for several hours.

The vehicle belonged to her caregiver, Roger Young-Ham, who is also known as Robert Young-Ham.

The autopsy report, finalized on December 26, 2019, revealed the cause of death was environmental heat exposure and the manner was accidental.

DCS and the Phoenix Police Department jointly investigated Samora's death.

The Phoenix Police investigation did not lead to charges.

The DCS investigation did not find evidence to remove the other children from the home, but did find evidence to substantiate the allegations of neglect against Mr. Young-Ham.

Mr. Young-Ham was an unlicensed kinship placement at the time of the incident.

His foster license had expired in 2010.

The Department provided in-home services to Mr. Young-Ham's family and the case was closed after the family successfully completed the services.

DCS received the following prior report involving Mr. Young-Ham:

On February 13, 2014, the Department received a report alleging Mr. Young-Ham physically abused a child. According to the report, the child alleged that Mr. Young-Ham threatened physical abuse as a punishment for stealing. The DCS investigation did not find evidence to support the allegation. The allegation was unsubstantiated and the case was closed.

DCS received the following prior report involving Samora Cousin:

On May 23, 2019, the Department received a report alleging Samora was neglected by her mother and father. According to the report, Samora tested positive for methamphetamines at the time of her birth. DCS took custody of Samora and placed her in an unlicensed kinship home. A dependency petition was filed with the Maricopa County Superior Court and the Department was providing services to the family. The allegations were substantiated. The case was still open at the time of Samora's death.

Recipient Name

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DCS would like to remind all caregivers to always double check for children in the backseat of a car every time you exit your vehicle.

For more information, please visit the DCS website at: <https://dcs.az.gov/news/double-check>.