



Statement on the near death of a three-year-old boy

Issue Date: October 29, 2018

On October 24, 2016, the Arizona Department of Child Safety received a physical abuse report regarding the near fatality of a three-year-old boy.

The child was found unresponsive in his home and transported to a hospital.

At the hospital, doctors determined the child was in critical condition due to severe head trauma and a lacerated liver.

The DCS investigation revealed the mother's boyfriend, Aaron Nienow, was caring for the child at the time he sustained his injuries.

Ultimately, the Department removed the children and placed them with relatives.

The juvenile court eventually ruled that the children were safe with their biological father and dismissed the dependency case.

After an extensive DCS investigation and an appeals process, the Department substantiated the physical abuse allegations against Mr. Nienow on September 26, 2018.

The Department has the following history with Mr. Nienow:

On February 9, 2014, the Department received a report alleging Mr. Nienow neglected and physically abused another child not related to the near fatality victim or his sibling. According to the report, Mr. Nienow was in a verbal argument with the child when he pushed the child, causing the child to fall to the ground. The child and Mr. Nienow denied the allegations and there were no marks or bruising on the child. Since there was not enough evidence to support removing the child from the home, the allegations were unsubstantiated and the case was closed.

On November 24, 2017, the Department received a report alleging Mr. Nienow neglected his child by not providing enough food during a weekly visit. The child was interviewed and stated Mr. Nienow did not have any food that the child liked. The child was assessed as safe with the other parent. The allegation was unsubstantiated and the case was closed.

The near fatality victim has the following DCS history:

On November 15, 2014, the Department received a report alleging the near fatality victim and his sibling were neglected by their parents. According to the report, the parents

engaged in a domestic violence incident in front of the children. The DCS investigation determined the children were safe with their mother and that she could protect the children from future incidents. The allegation against the father was substantiated and the case was closed.