

Statement on the near fatality of a one-year-old boy

Date Issued: March 31, 2023

On August 30, 2021, the Department of Child Safety received a report regarding a one-year old male who was taken to the hospital. Upon evaluation, the child was determined to be in critical condition due to fentanyl ingestion. On January 20, 2023 the Department substantiated the allegation of neglect of the child by his mother, Stephanie Gonzales. Following an assessment of child safety, the near fatality victim and a sibling were assessed as safe with their other parent. The Department provided the family with information for services available in the community and the case was closed on January 24, 2022.

DCS received the following prior reports involving Ms. Gonzales:

On July 24, 2020, a report was received that alleged neglect to the near fatality victim and a sibling by the mother, Stephanie Gonzales. The report alleged that mother overdosed with the children in the home. The children were assessed as safe in the care of their father. The DCS investigation did not find evidence to support the allegations. No services were provided to the family. The allegations were unsubstantiated and the case was closed on September 29, 2020.

On May 24, 2021 the Department of Child Safety received a report alleging physical abuse of the near fatality victim by his mother, Ms. Gonzales. A joint investigation was conducted with the Chandler Police Department. The report alleged that the child had scrapes and scabbing on his feet that were obtained in Ms. Gonzales' care. The DCS and Police investigation found that the injuries were consistent with mother's explanation that the child was dragging his feet in a walker toy and were not found to be the result of physical abuse; the police closed their investigation. The DCS investigation was still in progress when the near fatality incident occurred. The DCS investigation did not find evidence to support the allegations of physical abuse. The allegations were unsubstantiated and the case was closed on January 24, 2022 in conjunction with the near fatality report.