

Statement on the death of a four-year-old boy, Dominic Nunez

Date Issued: December 15, 2023

On June 24, 2021, the Department of Child Safety received a report regarding four-year-old, Dominic Nunez, who was hospitalized and found to have suffered multiple non-accidental injuries. Dominic was diagnosed with a traumatic brain injury on May 22, 2021, while in the care of his aunt, Jessica Nunez, in El Paso, TX. He was transported to a hospital in Tucson, AZ on June 24, 2021, where he was treated and later released to a medically assisted home. On October 17, 2021 Dominic passed away. It was determined that Dominic's cause of death is ascribed to blunt force injuries. On August 18, 2023, the Department substantiated the allegation of physical abuse to Dominic by his aunt, Jessica Nunez.

The Department conducted a joint investigation with the El Paso Police Department. The Department removed a sibling from the home and filed a dependency petition with the Pima County Juvenile Court on June 30, 2021.

The Department provided services to the family. The sibling was returned to the parents' care in September 2022 when the court dismissed the dependency.

DCS received the following prior reports involving the perpetrator, Jessica Nunez:

On June 13, 2011, a report was received alleging neglect to children by their mother, Jessica Nunez. The report alleged concerns for mother's ability to provide necessary care for her children due to her mental health. The investigation did not find evidence to support the allegations. The allegations were unsubstantiated. The family was provided with information on services available in the community and the case was closed.

On March 30, 2012, a report was received alleging neglect to children by their mother, Jessica Nunez. The report alleged concerns for unsanitary conditions in the home and lack of hygiene for the children. The investigation did not find evidence to support these allegations. The allegations were unsubstantiated. The investigation was still open when another report was received.

On September 5, 2012, a report was received alleging neglect and physical abuse to children by their mother, Jessica Nunez, and another adult. The report alleged concerns for domestic violence and mother's mental health impacting the children's safety in her care. Following an assessment of child safety, the children were removed from the home and a dependency petition was filed with the Pima County Juvenile Court. The Department provided services to the family and the allegations were substantiated. Jessica's parental rights were terminated to the children on July 18, 2015 and the case was closed.

On February 26, 2014, a report was received alleging neglect to a child by their mother, Jessica Nunez. The report alleged concerns for the child's safety due to a history of domestic violence and mental health for Jessica, including aggressive behaviors. The child was

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removed and added to the open dependency in Pima County Juvenile court for the mother's older children. Jessica's parental rights were terminated to the child on November 30, 2015 and the case was closed.