

## **Statement on the death of 3-year-old Damien Coats**

**Date Issued: July 10, 2024**

On January 25, 2023, the Department of Child Safety received a report regarding 3-year-old Damien Coats, who was transported to the hospital when found unresponsive and stiff in the home. Medical providers administered Narcan and his symptoms temporarily improved, but he ultimately died due to fentanyl intoxication. On June 25, 2024, the Department substantiated the allegation of neglect as to Venicia Belarde.

There were no other children in the home.

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There were no services provided by the Department.

DCS received the following prior reports involving Ms. Belarde:

On July 10, 2017, the Department received a report alleging neglect to a child by the mother, Ms. Belarde, and their father. The report alleged parents were using substances and had paraphernalia in the home. The DCS investigation found evidence to support the allegations. The child was removed from the home and placed in a licensed foster home. A dependency petition was filed with the Maricopa County Supreme Court and the allegation was substantiated. The family was provided reunification services. Ms. Belarde did not engage in services and a guardianship petition was filed. The guardianship was granted and the case closed on June 15, 2018.