

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

Date Issued: June 2, 2023

On June 20, 2021, the Arizona Department of Child Safety received a report regarding the near fatality of a 3-year-old child who was taken to the hospital after a near drowning. Upon examination, the child was determined to be in critical condition. The child had been in the care of his parents, Cassandra Armstead and Montez Bowers, as well as another adult, Megan Morris. It was discovered the child was not supervised when the incident occurred.

Following an assessment of child safety, the near fatality victim and his siblings were taken into DCS custody and placed in foster care. A dependency petition was filed with the Pima County Superior Court on June 23, 2021.

On October 12, 2021, the court found the dependency as to both parents, Cassandra Armstead and Montez Bowers.

On April 12, 2023, the Department substantiated the allegation of neglect to the child by Megan Morris.

The Department is providing services to the family.

DCS received the following prior reports involving Ms. Armstead and/or Mr. Bowers:

On June 12, 2018, the Department received a report alleging neglect to the near fatality victim and his siblings by Ms. Armstead and Mr. Bowers. The report alleged the parents engaged in a physical altercation with another adult while in the presence of the children. It also alleged the parents were using substances and not caring for the children's medical needs. The DCS investigation did not find evidence to support the allegations. This report was open when the next report was received.

On June 18, 2018, the Department received a report alleging neglect to the near fatality victim and his siblings by Ms. Armstead and Mr. Bowers. The report alleged the parents were exposing the children to sexual intercourse. There were additional concerns of domestic violence, substance use and lack of supervision of the children. The DCS investigation did not find evidence to support the allegations. The allegations as to both reports were unsubstantiated and the case was closed on June 27, 2018. The family was provided with daycare and community services.

On January 11, 2019, the Department received a report alleging neglect to the near fatality victim by his mother, Ms. Armstead. The report alleged the near fatality victim was behind on immunizations and his medical needs were not being addressed. The DCS investigation did not find evidence to support the allegations. The allegations were unsubstantiated and the case was closed on March 1, 2019. There were no services provided to the family.

On May 10, 2019, the Department received a report alleging neglect to a sibling by his mother, Ms. Armstead. The report alleged Ms. Armstead left one of her children alone in a car for 40 minutes. There were additional concerns of Ms. Armstead yelling and cussing at her children. The DCS investigation did not find evidence to support the allegations. The allegation was unsubstantiated and the case was closed on July 5, 2019. The family was provided with daycare and community services.

On July 20, 2019, the Department received a report alleging neglect to the near fatality victim and his siblings by his mother, Ms. Armstead. The report alleged the home was dirty due to dogs defecating in the home. The DCS investigation did not find evidence to support the allegations. The allegations were unsubstantiated and the case was closed on September 27, 2019. The family was provided with community services.

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On April 17, 2021, the Department received a report alleging neglect to the near fatality victim and his siblings by Ms. Armstead and Mr. Bowers. The report alleged the children were found by police unsupervised and wandering in a parking lot. It alleged when the parents were located they were intoxicated. The DCS investigation did not find evidence to support the allegations. The allegations were unsubstantiated and the case was closed on June 17, 2021. The family was offered community services.

DCS received no prior reports involving Ms. Morris.

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