

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

Date Issued: December 15, 2023

On July 13, 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 in critical condition. The child had multiple injuries that were believed to be non-accidental. The child was in the father's care at the time of the incident.

On August 6, 2021, the father, Patrick Smith, was charged with child abuse.

Following an assessment of child safety, the near fatality victim and his sibling were removed and placed in foster care.

The Department provided services to the family.

The children were reunified with their parents and the dependency was dismissed on February 14, 2023.

DCS received the following prior reports involving Mr. Smith:

On June 29, 2018, the Department received a report alleging neglect to the near fatality victim by his mother and father, Patrick Smith. The report alleged the child was born substance exposed to methamphetamine. Mr. Smith was alleged to be the father, however, did not have the means to establish paternity and was not caring for the child. The child was removed and a dependency petition was filed with the Pima County Superior Court. After confirming Mr. Smith was the biological father, services were provided and the child was reunified with him. The allegation of neglect was unsubstantiated as to the father and substantiated as to the mother.

On May 25, 2021, the Department received a report alleging physical abuse to the near fatality victim by Mr. Smith. The report indicated the child had injuries to his face and neck and alleged the father caused the injuries. The report was also investigated with law enforcement. The sibling did not disclose any abuse to the child by the father and reported the near fatality victim had been jumping on the bed and fell off. Law enforcement did not find any evidence of a crime. The allegation of physical abuse was unsubstantiated and the case remained open when the near fatality report was received.