

## **Statement on the near fatality of a five-year old female and fatality of her eleven-year-old sister, Jia Montanez:**

**Date Issued: September 14, 2022**

On March 24, 2021, the Arizona Department of Child Safety received a report regarding the death of an 11-year-old girl, Jia Montanez, and the near fatality of her five-year-old sister after they were involved in a motor vehicle accident.

On May 13, 2021, Tuulafoaina Sione Poloa was charged with one count of manslaughter, one count of aggravated assault, and two counts of aggravated DUI. Tuulafoaina Sione Poloa was Jia's step-father and the near fatality victim's father.

The DCS investigation determined the near fatality victim and the other children living in the home were safe to remain with their mother.

The family was referred for in-home services and the investigation was closed on November 29, 2021.

DCS received the following prior reports involving Tuulafoaina Sione Poloa and the child's mother:

On March 13, 2013, the Department received a report alleging Jia and one of her siblings were neglected by their mother. The report alleged the children were not being properly supervised and were exposed to illicit drug use in the home. The DCS investigation did not find evidence to support the allegations. The family was provided voluntary in-home services, but they did not successfully complete them. The allegations were unsubstantiated and the case was closed on November 27, 2013.

On September 18, 2015, the Department received a report alleging one of Jia's siblings was neglected by their mother and Tuulafoaina Sione Poloa. The report alleged the child had suspicious scratches. The DCS investigation did not find evidence to support the allegations. The allegation was unsubstantiated. The family was provided with community resources and the case was closed on August 9, 2016.

On December 7, 2016, the Department received a report alleging Jia, the near fatality victim, and their siblings were neglected by their mother and Tuulafoaina Sione Poloa. The report alleged the children were exposed to a domestic violence incident in the home. The report was still open when DCS received another report on the family.

On December 19, 2016, the Department received a report alleging one of Jia's siblings was physically abused by Tuulafoaina Sione Poloa. The report alleged the child had a bruised wrist. The DCS investigation did not find evidence to support the December 7 or the December 19 allegations. The allegations were unsubstantiated. The family was provided with community resources and the case was closed on January 6, 2017.

On November 16, 2017, the Department received a report alleging the near fatality victim and one of her siblings were neglected by their mother and Tuulafoaina Sione Poloa. The report alleged the children had multiple bruises. due to mother not being able to control the children's behaviors. The DCS investigation did not find evidence to support the allegations. The allegations were unsubstantiated. The family was provided with community resources and childcare and the case was closed on January 18, 2018.

On July 12, 2020, the Department received a report alleging one of Jia's siblings was neglected by the mother. The report alleged the child was exposed to marijuana in utero. Both the newborn child and the mother tested negative for marijuana. The DCS investigation did not find evidence to support the allegation. The allegation was unsubstantiated. The family was provided with community resources and the case was closed on August 11, 2020.

On December 9, 2020, the Department received a report alleging Jia, the near fatality victim, and their siblings were neglected by their mother and Tuulafoaina Sione Poloa. The report alleged the children were exposed to domestic violence in the home. The DCS investigation did not find evidence to support the allegations. The allegations were unsubstantiated. The family was provided with community resources and the case was closed on February 23, 2021.