



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

**OFFICE OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES**

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**REPORT ON THE NEAR FATALITY OF**



**BORN:** 04/03/2001

**DATE of Near Fatality:** 11/04/2011

**FAMILY KNOWN TO  
Delaware County Children and Youth Agency:**

**REPORT FINALIZED ON: June 11, 2012**

**Reason for Review:**

Senate Bill 1147, Printer's Number 2159 was signed into law on July 3, 2008. The bill became effective on December 30, 2008 and is known as Act 33 of 2008. As part of Act 33 of 2008, DPW must conduct a review and provide a written report of all cases of suspected child abuse that result in a child fatality or near fatality. This written report must be completed as soon as possible but no later than six months after the date the report was registered with ChildLine for investigation.

Act 33 of 2008 also requires that County Children and Youth Agencies convene a review when a report of child abuse involving a child fatality or near fatality is indicated or when a status determination has not been made regarding the report within 30 days of the oral report to ChildLine. Delaware County convened a review team on December 7, 2011, in accordance with Act 33 of 2008 related to this report.

**Family Constellation:**

<b><u>Name:</u></b>	<b><u>Relationship:</u></b>	<b><u>Date of Birth:</u></b>
[REDACTED]	Victim Child	4/3/2001
[REDACTED]	Mother (AP)	[REDACTED]/65
[REDACTED]	Father	[REDACTED]/69
[REDACTED]	Paternal Grandmother	[REDACTED]/42
[REDACTED]	Paternal Grandfather	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	Half Adult Sibling	[REDACTED]93
[REDACTED]	Half Adult Sibling	[REDACTED]/90

The mother is currently incarcerated. The child now resides with the father in the paternal grandparent's home. The siblings were not living in the home at the time of the incident.

**Notification of Child Near Fatality:**

On 11/4/11, Delaware County Children & Youth Agency received a report [REDACTED] with the following information: On 11/4/11 a report was made by [REDACTED] who shortly after the incident treated [REDACTED] for his injuries. They reported that mother tried to drug the child by putting [REDACTED] in a peanut butter sandwich which the child took a bite of. The child stated that it tasted bad. Mother then tried to cut off the child's leg with a sharp object. As a result the child suffered a very large cut to his right leg, mid-thigh to the bone. Mother also attempted to strangle the child. The child had faint ligature marks as a result. The child got away from mother and ran to a neighbor who called the police. The police and an emergency rescue squad responded to the scene. Mother was found in the home by the police. Mother was taken to Mercy Fitzgerald Hospital for physical injuries to her wrist as she tried to cut herself with

a broken piece of mirror. The child was taken to Crozer-Chester Medical Center where he was found to have life threatening injuries. The report was registered a near fatality as a result of [REDACTED] by mother.

#### **Summary of DPW Child Near-Fatality Review Activities:**

The Southeast Regional Office of Children, Youth and Families obtained and reviewed all present and past case records pertaining to the [REDACTED] family and police reports detailing the current incident. Follow up interviews were conducted with the Delaware County CYS Unit Administrator on 11/10/11. The Regional Office also participated in the County Internal Fatality Review Team meeting on December 7, 2011.

#### **Summary of Services to Family:**

#### **Children and Youth Involvement prior to Incident:**

Referral Date: 7/13/11

Services Provided: [REDACTED]

Subject child [REDACTED], half sibling (DOB [REDACTED] 93). Report was made stating that the maternal grandmother's home where the child resided was in deplorable condition and that the child is left unattended. Also reported was that grandmother had recently passed away and that mother, [REDACTED], may be using drugs.

The record states that the caseworker visited the home and it was not in a deplorable state and that [REDACTED] also lived with her adult sister and was not unattended. The child was to turn age 18 in September 2011. [REDACTED] was also interviewed, cooperated with the investigation, denied current drug and alcohol use stating she has been [REDACTED] for three years and attends [REDACTED] meetings. A safety analysis was completed on 8/1/11 after a home visit with mother, [REDACTED] and his sister [REDACTED]. Both children were deemed to be safe in the home and the case was subsequently closed. A Pennsylvania Risk Assessment was also completed on 8/1/11 which was determined to have no evidence of significant risk.

#### **Circumstances of Near Fatality and Related Case Activity:**

On 11/4/11, Mother tried to drug the child by putting [REDACTED] in a peanut butter sandwich. Mother then attempted to cut the child's leg off by slashing the child's leg with a sharp instrument. Mother also attempted to strangle the child. The child got away and went to a neighbor who called 911. Police and ambulance responded. Mother was taken to Mercy Fitzgerald Hospital and treated for self inflicted cuts to her wrist. The child was [REDACTED] Crozer-Chester Medical Center. The child was assessed to be in critical condition. Injuries were

determined to be life threatening and as a result of non-accidental trauma perpetrated by mother.

The child had surgery at Crozer-Chester Medical Center on 11/5/11 to close a [REDACTED] on the child's [REDACTED] thigh. It was thought that mother used a piece of broken mirror to cause the injury. Child also had [REDACTED] to the anterior part of the child's neck. [REDACTED] that mother attempted to strangle him. Child also tested positive for [REDACTED] which resulted from the child being given [REDACTED] by mother. The child was treated and [REDACTED] the hospital on 11/6/11 with a plan to be medically followed by his pediatrician. [REDACTED] was [REDACTED] with antibiotics to reduce the chance of infection. Child was mobile, alert and talking to his father and paternal grandparents about the incident. Child was [REDACTED] to the father and will be living with him in the home of the paternal grandparents. The child's prognosis was considered to be good and child was expected to make a full recovery. Child did return to school on 11/9/11. Child is receiving [REDACTED]

Dad was at work when the incident occurred. Once he was located he went to the hospital and responded appropriately to the child's situation. Dad stated that he had no idea why his wife would do such a thing. Dad's immediate plans were to ensure that his son was safe and received medical and [REDACTED]. Dad stated that child will not return to the home and that they will make a home with the paternal grandparents for an indefinite period of time. The grandparents have a reputation of being upstanding and family oriented people. Child appears to have a good stable relationship with his grandparents and he has spent a good deal of time with them prior to the incident.

Mother had recently suffered the loss of her mother and father. Mother recently had a job loss. Mother's reason for harming the child was that she wanted to [REDACTED] and did not want child to be left alone. Mother was [REDACTED] Mercy Fitzgerald Hospital for a laceration to her wrist as mother tried to cut herself with a broken piece of mirror. Mother was also [REDACTED] however police believe that mother was attempting to set fire to the house and not to herself. Mother was [REDACTED] on 11/4/11 and sent to the [REDACTED]. Mother was arrested on 11/7/11 and [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] Correctional Facility where she remains. The [REDACTED] Police Department is handling the investigation. Mother was charged with attempted homicide, reckless endangering another person, aggravated assault, arson and related offenses. Mother could not make bail which was set at [REDACTED]

The [REDACTED] that was conducted by the Delaware County Children and Youth Agency was concluded on 12/12/11. The results were [REDACTED] inflicted by the mother, who caused [REDACTED] to the child.

**Current Case Status:**

██████████ is currently in the legal and physical custody of his father and continues to live in the home of his paternal grandparents. The family continues to receive ██████████ through Delaware County CYS. The child is continuing ██████████ has started to have communication with his mother on the telephone for 10 minutes at a time. ██████████ listens in on the conversation and they are only having general conversations. He continues to do well in school. His injuries have healed and no further medical treatment is necessary. He is well supported by his family and community.

██████████ is still working part-time but is looking for full time employment so that he and ██████████ can move out of the grandparent's home and get a place of their own.

██████████ is still incarcerated. She has had a ██████████ while in prison and may be moved to an ██████████ was formally arraigned on 2/9/12. She is scheduled for a pre trial conference on March 12, 2012.

**County Strengths and Deficiencies and Recommendations for Change as Identified by the County's Near Fatality Report:**

Act 33 of 2008 also requires that County Children and Youth Agencies convene a review when a report of child abuse involving a child (near) fatality is indicated or when a status determination has not been made regarding the report within 30 days of the oral report to ChildLine. Delaware County has convened a review team in accordance with Act 33 of 2008 related to this report. This meeting took place on 12/7/11 at Delaware County CYS' Upper Darby Office.

**Strengths:** Delaware County CYS reports that the family was not open for services with the Agency when the near-fatality referral was received. The Agency felt that the ██████████ was completed in a timely fashion. The requirements of providing written and oral notifications were met. The ██████████ was filed within 60 days. Safety and risk assessments were completed and a safety plan was made to ensure the safety of ██████████

**Deficiencies:** Delaware County did not note any.

**Recommendations for Change at the Local Level:** The review team felt that it was difficult to predict homicidal and suicidal behavior as it occurred in this family. Discussion at the Act 33 meeting centered around the availability of prescription drugs and how the community can impact this problem as the ██████████ did not have a prescription for the ██████████ that was used during the incident. Also

discussed was how best the Agency and community can bring older adolescent siblings (18 & 21) into the [REDACTED] process as they too are greatly impacted by this event and may continue to have significant contact with, and influence over this young boy in the future, yet they are not directly eligible for Agency services and resources.

**Recommendations for Change at the State Level:** Delaware County did not note any needed change at the state level.

**Department Review of County Internal Report:**

The Department has received and reviewed the county report dated 1/31/12 and is in agreement with their findings.

**Department of Public Welfare Findings**

**Strengths:**

The case was not opened to Delaware County Children and Youth Agency at the time of the incident. A previous case however was recently closed. Contact with the family at that time appeared to be centered on issues involving the older child who was not living in the home at the time. This child lived with grandmother. The Agency saw both children and completed appropriate safety and risk assessment which negated the need for Agency services. The case was closed on 8/1/11.

The current [REDACTED] involving [REDACTED] was completed within 60 days fulfilling all regulatory requirements of the CPSL and Chapter 3490. The child was not placed as a result of the report. An appropriate safety plan was made with the child involving the child's non offending parent and grandparents. The mother who is the [REDACTED] has remained incarcerated.

**Deficiencies:**

During a previous intervention the child's father was not seen by the Agency.

**Department of Public Welfare Findings:**

As stated earlier, the case was not opened with the Agency at the time of the incident. Previous contact with the family could not predict the suddenness and/or severity of the current abuse as indicated by prior written records that describe mother's behavior and demeanor at a low level of risk of maltreatment.

**Department of Public Welfare Recommendations:**

The Department has no recommendations at this time.