

90-Day Summary Report for Child Death, Serious Injury or Egregious Incident

Case Tracking Number: 111005DSP-Rusk-154 Agency: Rusk County Dept. of Health and Human Services

Scope of DSP Review: No Review. The information contained in this report was provided by the agency.
 90-Day Review

Child Information: Age: 10 months Gender: Female Male
Race or Ethnicity: Caucasian
Special needs: None at the time of the incident

Child's Residence: In-home Out-of-home care placement

Date of Incident: October 5, 2011

Description of the incident, including the suspected cause of death, injury or egregious abuse or neglect:

On October, 5, 2011, the on-call worker received a report that a 10-month-old girl had been seen at the Rice Lake Hospital for suspected child abuse and subsequently flown down to St. Joseph's Hospital in Marshfield where she was immediately admitted. The mother had been at work and called her boyfriend, who was watching the baby and her sibling. The boyfriend indicated that the baby had been unresponsive, but he was finally able to wake her up. The mother indicated that she told him she wanted to take her to the hospital in Rice Lake, which they did. The boyfriend first said he was holding the child and his phone rang and as he went to get the phone, he tripped over the cat. Upon further questioning, he changed his story and said that the child was standing on the first step going to the upstairs and she fell off, hitting her head on the carpeted floor. Our department took the child, as well as her sibling, into temporary physical custody. The sibling was placed in a foster home, and the baby was placed at St. Joseph's Hospital. The baby had sustained head trauma, was experiencing a brain bleed and swelling, and had to be put on a ventilator and medically sedated. The hospital confirmed that they were unsure if the baby would make it through the night if the brain continued to swell. Additionally, there were various bruises on the child's face and head that were in various stages of healing. The baby was in ICU and the mother was allowed to be with the child due to the hospital providing 24-hour supervision. The sibling had been placed in foster care for her safety pending an assessment of this case. It was unclear at that time what really happened to the baby. The mother also sought a restraining order against the boyfriend. The baby was eventually taken off of the respirator and was responding quite well. She was released from the hospital and placed with her sister in foster care. There were follow up medical appointments to monitor the spots behind her eyes from the head trauma. They have now disappeared.

Findings by agency, including material circumstances leading to incident:

The agency conducted an assessment of this home and substantiated the boyfriend for physical abuse. The police obtained a search warrant for the residence and found a glass pipe used for smoking methamphetamine. The boyfriend admitted that he did use methamphetamine, and stated that the mother also used with him, which she denied. The home was found to be dirty, cat feces were found in the children's bedroom as well as in other rooms of the house. Dirty dishes and garbage was found in the kitchen. The boyfriend has an extensive criminal record, including various drug charges. The mother denies all drug use. The children remained in foster care for approximately 45 days, and were then placed with a relative. Reunification with the mother is currently underway and she has been compliant with the department. The boyfriend has yet to be charged. All medical information and reports was sent to a facility in the Twin Cities whose specialty is child abuse and neglect. The doctor confirmed that the injuries to the child were consistent with shaken baby, but he was not able to determine the exact time of the injury. The agency does not believe that the mother contributed to the physical abuse of the baby. The mother has been compliant in following through with services, but continues to deny what was actually going on in the home. She denied knowledge of her boyfriend's drug usage, even though evidence points to the contrary.

Additional information for children in home:

Description of the child's family:

The child was residing in a home with her half-sister, mother, and mother's boyfriend.

Yes No Statement of Services: Were services under ch. 48 or ch. 938 being provided to the child, family or alleged maltreater at the time of the incident, including any referrals received by the agency or reports being investigated at time of incident?

If "Yes", briefly describe the type of services, date(s) of last contact between agency and recipient(s) of those services, and the person(s) receiving those services:

N/A

Summary of all involvement in services as adults under ch. 48 or ch. 938 by child's parents or alleged maltreater in the previous five years:

A referral was received on March 24, 2011 regarding the condition of the home that the mother and her children were living in. It was screened in for Assessment. Public Health and DHHS went to the home and it was determined that the home was safe for the children. Mother was given information regarding resources available in the county and she was already utilizing them. Public Health also provided information to the mother as well.

A referral was received on October 5, 2011 regarding child abuse against the baby in the home. Screened in for Initial Assessment. The children were taken into custody and placed at the hospital and in foster care. Subsequently, the children were together in foster care and were then placed with an appropriate relative. Reunification with the mother is currently the goal. Mom's boyfriend was substantiated for physical abuse of the child, but no legal charges have been filed with the district attorney as of yet.

Summary of actions taken by the agency under ch. 48, including any investigation of a report or referrals to services involving the child, any member of the child's family living in this household and the child's parents and alleged maltreater at the age of 18 years or older:

There were only three referrals regarding this mother and her child(ren). One was screened out, and two (see above) were screened in. Of those, one was unsubstantiated and the current report was substantiated.

Summary of any investigation conducted under ch. 48 or ch. 938 and any services provided to the family since the date of the incident:

Again, refer to above. For the March 2011 referral, the mother was offered services, due to her very young age as a single parent. She refused them at that time and was already receiving assistance from other resources.

Services are currently being provided to this family, including supervised visitations which are migrating to unsupervised visitations and case management. The agency requested courtesy supervision from an adjoining county as that is where the mother has resided since the incident, as well as where the relative placement is. The agency will also request a change on venue in the next month as the mother has been living in their county for almost 6 months.

Additional information for children in out-of-home (OHC) placement at time of incident:

Description of the OHC placement and basis for decision to place child there:

Description of all other persons residing in the OHC placement home:

Licensing history: Including type of license, duration of license, summary of any violations by licensee or an employee of licensee that constitutes a substantial failure to protect and promote the welfare of the child.

Summary of actions taken by agency in response to the incident:

No actions taken or necessary.

Summary of policy or practice changes to address issues identified in the review of the incident:

N/A. No DSP review

Recommendations for further changes in policies, practices, rules or statutes needed to address identified issues:

N/A. No DSP review

*This 90-day summary report completes the Division of Safety and Permanence (DSP) review of this case.

Yes No Not Applicable

* If this case is undergoing a review that was not completed within 90 days, the DSP will complete and submit the final summary report within 6 months.