



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES

COMMISSIONER
H. L. Whitman, Jr.

A Review of Department of Family and Protective Services Involvement Child Fatality

On April 22, 2015, Child Protective Services (CPS) received a report involving concerns of physical abuse of Kamron Taylor. The report stated Kamron was unresponsive and noted to have multiple injuries. Kamron was transported to the hospital and was not expected to survive. On April 24, 2015, CPS was notified that Kamron had passed away as result of his injuries. CPS was involved with Kamron's family in 2013.

The Office of Child Safety completed a review of all current and past CPS involvement concerning Kamron's family. This report presents the Office of Child Safety's findings, summary of CPS involvement and actions taken, assessment of strengths in casework practice, and areas for improvement that may warrant further examination of this tragic loss of life.

Family Composition

Region 3 - Tarrant County

Name or Relationship to Kamron Taylor	Age at time of incident
Kamron Taylor	2
Mother	22
Father	24
Father's Paramour	27
Paternal Great Aunt	50

Summary of CPS History on Kamron Taylor / Family of Kamron Taylor

- On June 26, 2013, CPS received two reports alleging abuse/neglect of Kamron by his father and his father's paramour. The reports were merged and the allegations were investigated. The investigation was concluded on August 1, 2013 and the case was transferred to CPS's Family Based Safety Services program.
- On August 1, 2013, Family Based Safety Services opened the case to provide ongoing services to Kamron's family. The case was closed February 25, 2014.
- On April 22, 2015, CPS received two reports alleging abuse and neglect of Kamron by his father and his father's paramour. On April 23, 2015, CPS received a third report alleging abuse and neglect of Kamron by his father and his father's paramour. All three intakes were merged. On April 24, 2015, CPS was notified that Kamron passed away as a result of his injuries.

Detailed Account of CPS History on Family of Kamron Taylor

On **June 26, 2013**, CPS received two reports alleging abuse and neglect of Kamron by his father and his father's paramour. The reports were similar in nature and stated that Kamron was observed to have various bruises to his face and body. There was also concern for Kamron's height and weight possibly being below the normal growth curve. During the investigation, Kamron was observed to have numerous bruises on his face and abdomen at various stages of healing. Medical staff confirmed that the injuries sustained by Kamron were abusive and not a result of accidental means. It was learned that Kamron had been in the care of his father since approximately a month after the child's birth and the mother rarely had any contact with Kamron. Although Kamron's father was his primary caregiver, it was determined that during the couple of weeks leading up to the CPS report, Kamron had been in the care of multiple caregivers. Kamron's family moved between various family and friends approximately every two days as they did not have their own place of residence. Kamron's father and his paramour denied being abusive to Kamron and were unable to provide a plausible explanation for the child's injuries. Although there were concerns for Kamron's height and weight, there was not sufficient evidence to determine that he was malnourished. Due to Kamron's young age, an interview was not possible. Kamron was voluntarily placed with a relative in a parental child safety placement (PCSP) during the investigation, and Kamron's father and his paramour agreed to participate with ongoing services through the department. Law enforcement also conducted a criminal investigation. The CPS investigation was concluded on August 1, 2013, as reason to believe for physical abuse of Kamron by an unknown perpetrator. Kamron's father and his paramour were given a disposition of unable to determine for physical abuse of Kamron. Although there was not sufficient evidence to determine they were responsible for the abuse, they could not be ruled out. The case was transferred to CPS' Family Based Safety Services so that services could be provided to the family to address the concerns surrounding the physical abuse of Kamron.

OCS Assessment:

- CPS staff implemented a parental child safety placement.
- Due to the severity of the injuries and the inability to determine who had caused the injuries, a staffing with the department's legal counsel may have been merited to determine if legal intervention with continued relative placement might have been more appropriate.
- After the initial contact with law enforcement, there was no follow up to determine the result of the criminal investigation.

On **August 1, 2013**, the case was transferred to CPS' Family Based Safety Services. Recommended services to be provided included Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) screening/services for Kamron and individual and couples counseling for Kamron's father and his paramour to address parenting, communication, and relationship issues. Additionally, random drug screening and parent education classes for both Kamron's father and his paramour were to be provided as well. During August and September 2013, Kamron's father and his paramour engaged in services; however, thereafter, they failed to notify CPS of their whereabouts and contact with the family was sporadic. In October 2013, the father's paramour informed CPS that she and Kamron's father had separated and questioned whether she still needed to complete services. In December 2013, Kamron's father informed CPS that he no longer wanted Kamron back in his care and indicated Kamron could stay with the relative placement. In January 2014, Kamron's father and his paramour agreed to a family team meeting (FTM) to discuss options for Kamron's continued safety and well-being. During the FTM, drug screens were administered to Kamron's father and his paramour that yielded negative results. Kamron's father thus far had only participated in one counseling session while

his paramour participated in a few sessions; however, neither participated with parenting classes. It was determined during the FTM that Kamron would remain with the PCSP caregiver and all contact between Kamron, his parents, and his father's paramour would be supervised by the relative. The case was closed with a parental child safety placement and approved by a program administrator as required. The directive provided by CPS was that the caregiver was responsible for deciding when Kamron would be returned to his father by first determining that Kamron's father was drug free, participated in and successfully completed individual counseling and parenting, and maintained a safe and stable home environment. CPS further directed the caregiver to contact CPS if Kamron's parents tried to take Kamron from the caregiver's home without the caregiver's consent. The Family Based Safety Services case was closed on February 25, 2014.

OCS Assessment:

- During the investigation stage, the narrative indicates the Family Based Safety Services (FBSS) assessment was scheduled in July 2013; however, Kamron's father was unable to make the appointment. There is no further documentation either in the investigation or FBSS stage whether a FBSS assessment was completed as required.
- During the first two months the case was open with FBSS, the caseworker maintained contact with the service providers and documented beneficial information regarding services being offered and progress made and/or concerns noted.
- The only random drug test offered was in January 2014 once it was determined the case would be closed.
- Between August and October 2013, the case was transferred twice resulting in three different caseworkers working with the family during the Family Based Safety Services case.
- There was no follow up with law enforcement with regard to the criminal case.
- There is no documented discussion with Kamron's father as to the reasons why he no longer wanted Kamron returned to his care.
- There is no documentation to suggest whether a staffing with legal counsel was considered to determine if legal intervention was merited to establish safety and permanency for Kamron.
- There is no indication that the caseworker provided the caregiver with information on how to obtain legal custody of Kamron on her own.

On **April 22, 2015**, CPS received two reports alleging abuse and neglect of Kamron by his father and father's paramour. On **April 23, 2015**, a third report alleging abuse and neglect of Kamron was received. The reports state that Kamron was found unresponsive and was transported to a hospital where he was noted to have several life threatening injuries. All three reports were merged for investigation. Prior to completing the investigation, on April 24, 2015, CPS was notified that Kamron Taylor passed away as a result of his injuries.

Overall Case Review Findings and Recommendations

Child Protective Services (CPS) was in the process of investigating a near fatality involving Kamron when CPS learned that Kamron died as a result of his injuries that were from non-accidental trauma. CPS had previously been involved with the family in 2013 regarding concerns for physical abuse of Kamron.

During the review of a child fatality, certain areas of improvement may be identified including individual training needs, statewide trainings, policy revisions, updates to best practice guidance, and/or revisions to state statutes.

Child Protective Services has made significant changes to the assessment, support, and ongoing use of Parental Child Safety Placements (PCSP) between FY2015 and FY2016. This includes updated training for staff, integrating a full assessment into the IMPACT system to track full assessments and approval of placements, and strengthening the requirements of when to use a PCSP and who may be approved as a caregiver during a PCSP. In cases where children remain in parental child safety placements at the conclusion of the case, CPS staff must first work with legal counsel to assess the need for legal intervention to address child safety. In situations where CPS cannot intervene legally, information is provided to the caregiver(s) on how to proceed with obtaining legal custody of the child.

The Office of Child Safety recommends the following:

- Ongoing contact with law enforcement throughout the life of the case should be made to determine the outcome of a criminal investigation related to the child abuse or neglect under investigation by CPS.