

**OKLAHOMA COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

**OFFICE OF JUVENILE SYSTEM OVERSIGHT**

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**Report Release Date: April 8, 2015**

**Review of the Death of Bryson Lowell**

**Of Comanche County, Oklahoma**

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**General Information**

The Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) received a request for a public report regarding the death of two-year-old Bryson Lowell. Bryson's foster parent, Heather Valentine Adams, was charged on March 19, 2015, with one count of Murder in the First Degree – Child Abuse, by the Comanche County District Attorney's Office.

**Authorization**

The following is a summary of the actions taken by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS); the dates and outcome of investigations and actions taken by the OKDHS; the actions taken by the district attorney; the dates and summary of judicial proceedings; and the rulings of the court, as authorized by 10A O.S Section 1-6-105.

**Identifiers**

Child's name: Bryson Lowell

Age at time of incident: Two-years-old

Person(s) Responsible for the Child (PRFC): Heather Valentine Adams, foster mother

Biological Sibling One: Seven-months-old

Foster Child: Thirteen-years-old

The Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth (OCCY) did not become aware of this family until after the death incident.

### **Criminal Charges**

The Oklahoma State Courts Network (OSCN) system documented that charges were filed against Heather Valentine Adams on March 19, 2015, as Criminal Felony proceedings. The charge of Murder in the First Degree – Child Abuse, was filed by the Comanche County District Attorney’s office. The OSCN documented that bond was set at \$150,000 on March 19, 2015.

### **Death Incident**

The OKDHS received a report that Bryson Lowell was transported on March 15, 2015, by emergency service personnel to a Comanche County medical facility. The report indicated that upon his arrival to the medical facility, medical professionals noted Bryson’s eyes were bloodshot and that he had multiple bruising to all four extremities in various stages of healing. It was also noted that he had bruising to his torso, penis, and rectum. Bryson died as a result of his injuries on March 15, 2015.

The OKDHS accepted this as a Priority I Investigation. This investigation was still pending at the time this report was written.

## **Prior Involvement of the PRFC with the Department of Human Services**

There was one prior pertinent report of alleged abuse regarding Ms. Adams and a foster child in her care.

### Report to the OKDHS Alleging Abuse/Neglect (February 18, 2015) (Statewide Abuse and Neglect Hotline)

The report was received on February 18, 2015, and was Screened-Out by the Statewide Abuse and Neglect Hotline. Reportedly, Ms. Adams required a foster child run laps around her home's property as a form of discipline. Also reported was that Ms. Adams confiscated personal property of the foster child and ripped a picture of the foster child and her biological mother. This foster child was removed from the foster home by the permanency worker. This report was classified as Abuse/Mental Injury by the Statewide Abuse and Neglect Hotline.

The OKDHS Screened-Out this report as a Resource Home Policy Violation. The matter was referred to foster care representatives to address with the foster parent. The OKDHS did not implement a Foster Home Written Plan of Compliance as a result of this report.

## **Judicial Proceedings prior to the child's death incident**

The decedent and Biological Sibling One were placed into OKDHS custody in Oklahoma County on October 13, 2014, as a result of a near-death incident involving Biological Sibling One. The parental rights for both biological parents were terminated

by jury trial on February 26, 2015. Biological Sibling One remains in the permanent custody of the OKDHS at the time this report was written.