

**OKLAHOMA COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH  
OFFICE OF JUVENILE SYSTEM OVERSIGHT**

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**Report Release Date: February 3, 2016**

**Review of the Death of Jacee L. Sanner**

**Of Carter 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 ten year old Jacee Sanner. One count of Felony Child Neglect was filed in Carter County by the District Attorney on September 8, 2014, against Ashley Naoma Milligan, the child's mother.

**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 DHS; 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:	Jacee L. Sanner
Date of Birth:	July 6, 2004
Date of Death:	August 10, 2014
Persons Responsible for the Child:	Ashley Naoma Milligan, Mother

Sibling 1:	Older Sibling
Sibling 2:	Younger Sibling
Sibling 3:	Younger Sibling

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

**Death Incident**

The OKDHS was notified of the death of Jacee Sanner on August 8, 2014.

The referral stated that the Lone Grove Police Department and EMT's were called to the home of 10 year old Jacee Sanner on August 8, 2014. When the police and EMT's arrived they found Jacee swaddled in a blanket in the living room. She was pronounced dead at the home. Jacee's mother, Ashley Milligan, reported she attempted to feed Jacee Pedialyte at some point that evening on the porch of the home. Jacee refused to drink the Pedialyte Ms. Milligan placed Jacee on a blanket in the floor of the living room. It is unknown how long Jacee lay on the floor before Ms. Milligan found Jacee to be unresponsive and contacted 911. The first responders noted that rigor mortis had already begun to set in and that lividity was present. There was no bruising observed on the body; however the Medical Examiner Investigator noted that Jacee appeared to be grossly underweight. Jacee was transported to the Medical Examiner's office in Oklahoma City where the manner of death was ruled unknown. The Medical Examiner's findings included Jacee's weight as 23 pounds 44% of the 3<sup>rd</sup> percentile for a 10 year old female and under height measuring 43 inches 87% of the 3<sup>rd</sup> percentile for a 10 year old female.

According to reports Jacee was born full-term and was by all accounts normal. When she was 6 months old, she presented with a high fever that brought on seizures and ultimately developed into a Traumatic Brain Injury. Jacee had multiple handicaps including seizures brought on by temperature variations and light. These conditions left her totally reliant of others for survival. Jacee was seen by her primary care physician as well as a neurologist regularly until June 2013. At that visit Jacee weighed 48lbs. Jacee had been in the care of her relatives from August 2012 through August 2013. At that time Jacee returned to her mother's care. Ms. Milligan stated in the referral that Jacee had been refusing to take nourishment for approximately one year and was losing weight during this time.

Jacee had not seen a doctor in over a year. The report stated that Ashley Milligan told the DHS worker, supervisor, law enforcement and medical examiner investigator she did not seek medical attention because she didn't want people to think she was starving her and risk the removal of her other children.

The OKDHS substantiated the allegations that Ashley Milligan acted or failed to act in a manner that resulted in Jacee's death. The OKDHS has recommended termination of parental rights to her surviving children due to the Heinous and Shocking nature surrounding Jacee's death.

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

The previous reports to the OKDHS are pertinent as they contain similar allegations as found in Jacee's death.

A referral was received on April 18, 2011 alleging abuse of six year old Jacee. It was alleged that Jacee had a large scab on her chin and a small scrap on the other side of her chin as well as "carpet burns" on her knee that had been wrapped in gauze. The report was assigned as an Assessment by the OKDHS. The worker observed the

scabs and carpet burn but did not deem them to be life threatening. Ms. Milligan, Jacee's mother reported that she had been in the kitchen cooking dinner and had placed Jacee on the couch where she rolled off and rubbed her chin on the carpet. When Ms. Milligan noticed that Jacee was on the floor, she immediately attended to her. The OKDHS closed the Assessment with No Services Recommended. It was suggested that Jacee attend school more regularly and that if she could not attend school, that the school counselor be contacted for home visits. Ms. Milligan was also asked to follow-up with DDSD services.

A referral was received on September 29, 2009 alleging neglect of five year old Jacee by her mother and step-father due to confinement, failure to provide medical attention, failure to provide adequate nutrition and inadequate physical care. The report was accepted as an Assessment, it was reported that Jacee appeared to be starving and that her weight at the time was 26lbs. It was reported that Jacee had approximately 30 seizures a day as a result of the mother discontinuing seizure medication. Jacee was seen with insect bites and was developing a bed sore on her tailbone from not being moved. The CPS Assessment noted that Jacee was not gaining weight and had lost weight. This was said to be the result of Jacee's irregular bowel functions which made it possible for her to lose 3lbs-4lbs in a weekend. Jacee was evaluated by a physician on October 2, 2009 who reported a lesion was forming on the tailbone but was not a concern at present. The mother did state that she took Jacee off the seizure medication about a year prior to consulting a physician. OKDHS noted Jacee to be skinny but was able to observe her eating oatmeal. It was recommended to the mother that Jacee see her neurologist regarding the cessation of Jacee's seizure medication. The Assessment was closed noting the children were safe.

A referral was received on February 2, 2009 alleging inadequate physical care of Jacee.. The CPS assessment concluded that the children's primary care was being met by another relative and other family and "all needs are being minimally met". It was recommended that Jacee attend school more regularly, she receive DDSD services and she be taken to the doctor more regularly. The CPS Assessment concluded that the children were safe.

A referral was received on September 9, 2008 alleging neglect of 2 siblings and Jacee Sanner. The reported alleged that the home was "filthy" and that Jacee appeared to be malnourished. The report was accepted as an Assessment. OKDHS CPS found the home to be cluttered but stated that there were no safety threats. Jacee's mother and father reported that Jacee could eat on her own but could not drink on her own. No collaterals were contacted. The CPS Assessment concluded that the children were safe.

### **Judicial proceedings prior to the child's death**

There were no previous judicial proceedings by the Oklahoma Juvenile Court System in regard to this family.