

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

---

**Report Release Date: May 23, 2016**

**Review of the Death of Jeremiah Rodriguez-Cano**  
**Of Oklahoma County, Oklahoma**

---

**General Information**

The Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) received a request for a public report regarding the death of Jeremiah Rodriguez-Cano. Jeremiah died on February 13, 2014. Jeremiah's mother, Sasha Cano, was charged on January 14, 2015, with one count of Child Abuse by the Oklahoma 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:	Jeremiah Rodriguez-Cano
Date of Birth:	May 29, 2012
Date of Death:	February 13, 2014
Person(s) Responsible for the Child (PRFC):	Sasha Cano, biological mother
Sibling One:	Eight-years-old
Sibling Two:	Seven-years-old
Sibling Three:	Six-years-old
Sibling Four:	Five-years-old
Sibling Five:	Two-years-old
Sibling Six:	Six-months-old

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

**Death Incident (Oklahoma County)**

The OKDHS received a report that Jeremiah Rodriguez-Cano was transported on February 13, 2014, by emergency service personnel to an Oklahoma County medical facility. The report indicated that Jeremiah was brought to the facility in full arrest after allegedly choking on cereal while in the care of his mother. The report indicated that upon arrival, medical professionals noted there was a contusion on Jeremiah's forehead

and small abrasions on his face and penis. The report indicated that the contusion and abrasions were the result of a fall four days prior to Jeremiah's death.

The OKDHS accepted this as a Priority I Investigation. According to the documentation, Jeremiah's siblings were present when the incident occurred. The documentation indicated that according to the siblings, Jeremiah choked as reported, but also that Ms. Cano threw Jeremiah onto the bed on other occasions and that Jeremiah fell off a bed and that Ms. Cano spanked him and dropped him off the bed. Ms. Cano reportedly explained that she discovered Jeremiah was choking and tried unsuccessfully to dislodge the obstruction with her finger. According to the documentation, she denied physical abuse to any of the children.

The Oklahoma Office of the Chief Medical Examiner's Report of Investigation determined that the manner of death in this case was Unknown, and the probable cause of death was listed as Bilateral Acute Aspiration Bronchopneumonia. The other significant medical condition was listed on the report as "Evidence of Physical Neglect and Possible Abuse." A supplemental report regarding this death was provided by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner which included the statement:

"Whereas the cause of death is pneumonia, this child's body shows signs of neglect and possible physical abuse. Lethal physical trauma is not demonstrated, but the injuries on this child's body are not explained by a single fall from a couch or bed. It is my opinion that the manner of death is best classified as undetermined."

The OKDHS made a substantiated finding on allegations of Threat of Harm and Beating as to Ms. Cano with regard to Siblings One, Two, Three and Four. The OKDHS substantiated the Threat of Harm allegation as to Sibling Five. The OKDHS also substantiated the child death allegation regarding Jeremiah as to Ms. Cano. The OKDHS requested and received emergency custody of the children and requested that the Oklahoma County District Attorney's office file a deprived petition in the matter. The Oklahoma County District Attorney filed a deprived petition in this matter on March 5, 2014. The matter was still pending at the time this report was written.

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

There were four prior pertinent reports of alleged abuse or neglect regarding Ms. Cano and the children.

#### Report One (September 3, 2011) (Oklahoma County)

The first report was received by the Oklahoma County OKDHS on September 3, 2011. The report alleged that Siblings One and Four were the victims of neglect because of abandonment by Ms. Cano. Law enforcement was notified and responded as well. Reportedly, Ms. Cano left the children with someone she did not know the previous day and had not returned to retrieve the children, even though she was supposed to return after a couple of hours. The caregiver did not know the children's legal names or where the family lived. The children were placed into the protective custody of law enforcement until an investigation was completed.

The OKDHS accepted this report as a Priority I Investigation. The Child Protective Services' (CPS) worker was unable to communicate with the children because of language differences. According to the documentation, the CPS worker was contacted by Ms. Cano, who reportedly disclosed that she had two other children who were in the care of their father in another state. The CPS worker later determined that the other children, Siblings Two and Three, were actually in Oklahoma. The OKDHS was unable to assume physical custody of Siblings Two and Three for approximately one month after this incident. Reportedly, Ms. Cano did not have a stable residence for the family and frequently moved from home to home with the children.

The OKDHS substantiated the allegation of abandonment, requested and received emergency custody of the children from the Oklahoma County Juvenile District Court.

#### Report Two (May 30, 2012) (Oklahoma County)

The second report was received by the Oklahoma County OKDHS on May 30, 2012. The report alleged that Jeremiah was the victim of neglect because of threat of harm by Ms. Cano. Specifically, Ms. Cano delivered Jeremiah on May 29, 2012, and because she was the alleged perpetrator on an open court-involved juvenile deprived case, the OKDHS was required to investigate whether Ms. Cano had corrected the conditions enough to allow her to take the baby home.

The OKDHS accepted this as a Priority I Investigation. The OKDHS determined Ms. Cano had not satisfactorily completed enough services by this time, and requested to add Jeremiah to the existing petition. A juvenile deprived judge determined that the child would not be safe in the care of Ms. Cano, and awarded emergency custody of Jeremiah to the OKDHS. The CPS worker substantiated the allegation of threat of harm.

#### Report Three (June 22, 2013) (Oklahoma County)

The OKDHS received the third report on June 22, 2013. At this time, the children were in the legal custody of the OKDHS; and placed in trial reunification with Ms. Cano. The report alleged that Siblings One, Two, Three, Four, and Jeremiah were the victims of neglect by Ms. Cano because of lack of supervision. The report specifically stated that the children had bruises and scratches because of rough play. Thirteen-month-old Jeremiah was also bruised and it was unclear how he received the bruises.

The OKDHS accepted this as a Priority I Investigation. The CPS worker documented observation of all of the children on June 22, 2013, and noted that Jeremiah had one small bruise on his cheek as a result of toddling and one of the siblings had a scratch on his arm. Ms. Cano, who was pregnant at the time, reportedly told the worker that she did not see Jeremiah fall and that one of the siblings told her he fell on a toy. While the OKDHS was completing this investigation, a subsequent report, identified in this report as Report Four, was brought to the attention of the OKDHS.

The CPS worker assigned to complete the investigation of Report Three documented subsequent contact with Ms. Cano and all of the children on July 8, 2013. The CPS worker documented that the children were well-fed and reported no concerns about the

frequency and amount of food they received. The CPS worker documented a full body inspection of Jeremiah, and noted no concerns with his weight or appearance.

The CPS worker made an unsubstantiated finding regarding all of the allegations.

#### Report Four (July 8, 2013) (Oklahoma County)

The OKDHS received the fourth report on July 8, 2013. The report alleged that Jeremiah was the victim of inadequate physical care by his mother. Specifically, it was alleged that Ms. Cano was not feeding or bathing Jeremiah. This report was Screened-Out by the OKDHS and the allegation was added to the open investigation, identified in this report as Report Three.

The children were in custody until December 16, 2013, when the deprived petition was dismissed because of successful reunification.

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

Siblings One, Two, Three, and Four were placed into OKDHS custody in Oklahoma County on September 3, 2011, as a result of neglect allegations involving Ms. Cano. The Oklahoma County District Attorney's Office filed a deprived petition on September 21, 2011. The children were adjudicated deprived on February 23, 2012. The Oklahoma County Juvenile Judge ordered that Ms. Cano complete an Individualized Service Plan on February 23, 2012.

The petition was amended to include the birth of Jeremiah on May 29, 2012. The petition was dismissed on December 16, 2013, because the children were successfully reunified with Ms. Cano.