

Office of Juvenile System Oversight

REVIEW OF THE DEATH OF LEONARDO TOWE OKMULGEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

Report Release Date: June 16, 2026

OVERVIEW

The Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) received a request to conduct a case review concerning the death of Leonardo Towe.

On January 28, 2025, the Okmulgee County District Attorney formally charged the biological mother, Jordan Shay Burks, with the felony offense of Child Neglect.

IDENTIFIERS

Child's Name:	Date of Birth:	Date of Death:
Leonardo Towe	August 25, 2020	June 20, 2024

Person Responsible for Child (PRFC):

Jordan Shay Burks
J.T. (Biological Father)
K.K. (Jordan Burks' boyfriend/
roommate)

ACTIONS

The release of the following summary of the actions taken by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS) and the proceedings in the district court is authorized by 10A O.S. § 1-6-105(H).

The OJSO did not become aware of this case until after the death incident of Leonardo Towe.

DEATH INCIDENT

On June 20, 2024, the OKDHS office in Okmulgee County received a report of the death of three-year-old Leonardo Towe. The report indicated the Okmulgee County Sheriff's Office requested a joint response regarding Leonardo's death. The report stated the child was found not breathing at 5:53 in the morning, and EMS was called. The report also indicated Emergency Medical Services (EMS) pronounced Leonardo's time of death at 6:14 am.

The report stated there was a history of substance abuse in the home, and it was a possibility that Leonardo had ingested something. EMS reported to the Sheriff's Deputy first on the scene that, upon arrival, Ms. Burks came running out of the home, telling them to bring Narcan. The deputy also reported that Ms. Burks told him and EMS that she had been an addict for the past three years, and it appeared to her that the child had overdosed.

OKDHS documented that Leonardo Towe had been in the home with his mother, Jordan Burks, and the mother's boyfriend/roommate, K.K., in trial reunification since March 6, 2024. Leonardo was originally removed from Ms. Burks and J.T. due to Ms. Burks' substance use of fentanyl and allegations of domestic violence by J.T. The day before Leonardo's passing, Ms. Burks reported she and Leonardo had played outside and played video games. It was reported that Leonardo was acting normally the entire day.

- On June 20, 2024, OKDHS accepted this report as a Priority I Investigation and initiated contact with the family on the same date.

INVESTIGATION

The people interviewed during the investigation included Leonardo's biological parents, Leonardo's mother's boyfriend, law enforcement, medical professionals, and family relatives.

During an interview with law enforcement, OKDHS documented that the Okmulgee County Sheriff's Office responded to this address at least three times in the past year; once for law enforcement issues and twice for medical reasons. The Sheriff's office reported one of the medical responses to the home was due to Ms. Burks live-in boyfriend and roommate, K.K., overdosing.

OKDHS further documented that the Okmulgee County Sheriff's Office stated on the date of the death, they seized one small black cylinder containing a green leafy substance, and two small pieces of foil containing burnt residue. The Sheriff's report also stated that three pipes and several glass bongs were in Ms. Burks' and K.K.'s home. The deputy also reported that, while writing her statement, Ms. Burks kept stating she "messed up."

On December 16, 2024, the Medical Examiner's report received by the OKDHS documented the probable cause of death as Acute Fentanyl Toxicity and the manner of death as Accident.

On January 28, 2025, the Okmulgee County District Attorney's office filed one felony count of Child Neglect against Jordan Burks.

- The OKDHS made a Substantiated Finding of Neglect/Death by Jordan Burks and K.K. to Leonardo Towe.

PRIOR INVOLVEMENT OF THE PRFC WITH OKLAHOMA DEPT. OF HUMAN SERVICES

The OJSO identified two pertinent reports of child abuse before the death incident of three-year-old Leonardo Towe.

Pertinent Report 1

This report was received on July 12, 2022. The report stated the mother was a drug addict, and J.T. abandoned the child. A family member was denied guardianship of Leonardo, and the mother admitted she could not pass a urine analysis. The court gave the father, J.T., custody of Leonardo, and the mother was only to have supervised visits. The father was also to participate in Comprehensive Home-Based Services in the home, but did not cooperate with the intake for that service.

- The OKDHS accepted the report as a Priority I Investigation with an initiation due date of July 12, 2022.
- The OKDHS made a Finding of Services Recommended, No Finding, Failure to Cooperate as to the allegations of Neglect/Threat of Harm/Substance Abuse and Neglect/Abandonment as to Leonardo Towe by his biological parents.

Pertinent Report 2

This report was received on September 4, 2022. The report alleged that Leonardo was neglected by his parents. It was reported that there were videos of Ms. Burks and J.T. fighting in the presence of the child, as well as using substances. It was reported that J.T. had been arrested for strangulation of Ms. Burks. It was also reported that J.T. allowed Ms. Burks to be alone with Leonardo, even though she had been ordered to have supervised visitation only through the guardianship court.

- The OKDHS accepted the report as a Priority II Investigation with an initiation due date of September 7, 2022.
- Leonardo Towe was placed in OKDHS custody on September 13, 2022.

JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS PRIOR TO THE CHILD'S DEATH

The OJSO identified no relevant judicial proceedings prior to the death incident.