

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

Report Release Date: January 29, 2014

Review of the Near-Death of K.S.

of Pittsburg County, Oklahoma

General Information

On March 12, 2013, the Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) received an inquiry regarding the near-death of K.S. A Felonious Child Abuse charge was filed in Pittsburg County District Court on July 22, 2013, against Shana Suggs the children'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 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:	K.S.
Age at time of Incident:	Five-years-old
Date of Near Death:	January 29, 2013
Alleged Perpetrator:	Shana Suggs

The Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth (OCCY) did not become aware of this case until after the near-death of K.S.

Criminal Charges

The On Demand Court Records (ODCR) system documented that charges were filed against Shana Suggs on July 22, 2013, as Criminal Felony Proceedings. The charge of Child Abuse by Injury was filed by the Pittsburg County District Attorney's office. The ODCR documented that a Warrant of Arrest was issued for Shana Suggs on July 24, 2013, and that she was arrested on July 25, 2013. The OKDHS also documented that her bail was set at \$25,000.00.

Near Death Incident

On January 30, 2013, the OKDHS received a report that “all of the children were outside and someone poured gasoline all over herself.” The reporter stated that K.S. went inside and told her mother that her skin was burning. The reporter then stated that “somehow” K.S. ignited. The reporter stated that they were not sure what had happened but the child was reported to be in critical condition in a medical facility in another state.

The OKDHS accepted the report as a Priority I Investigation. The OKDHS documented that a variety of scenarios of what had happened to K.S. were reported to them which included: the gas can was outside, the gas can was inside the house on a table, the child was in the bathtub and the child was outside of the bathtub.

One sibling stated that K.S.’s whole body was burned. This sibling also reported that K.S. was in her panties and their mother told her to stop rubbing herself but she would not, so their mother put a blanket over K.S. Then this sibling reported that the other siblings were taken to a relative’s place of employment.

K.S. stated to the OKDHS that her mother and another adult drove her to the hospital but first they stopped twice to drop off her siblings with other relatives. The OKDHS documented that the child was asked how it happened that she and her mother were the only ones who got burned. The OKDHS documented that at this time the child became very quiet and began to cry.

The OKDHS documented that the mother, Shana, had told the out of state worker that K.S. was in the bath at the time of the fire but later told the Oklahoma worker that the child was standing between the bathtub and the hot water heater. The OKDHS noted that there was no clear evidence that the hot water heater caused the fire but there were still questions as to how the spout of the gas can was melted if it was outside the home or in the living room as it had been reported.

The OKDHS documented what was clear was that K.S. sustained a life threatening injury as a result of having gasoline on her and no one could clearly state how this occurred or how the fire was started.

The OKDHS made an overall finding of Substantiated as to the allegation of Neglect-Near Death and Neglect-Threat of Harm. The OKDHS requested a petition to be filed and the children were removed by Emergency Court Order on January 31, 2013. K.S. and her siblings were placed in Emergency OKDHS Custody on January 31, 2013.

K.S. was discharged from the medical facility on March 25, 2013, where she had been admitted on January 31, 2013. She was moved to an OKDHS Foster Home. K.S. and three of her siblings were moved from Emergency Custody and placed in Temporary OKDHS Custody on March 28, 2013.

The Individualized Service Plan for Shana Suggs was court ordered on May 30, 2013, and as of the last Juvenile Court hearing on November 21, 2013, K.S was placed in a permanent guardianship as her mother Shana, had failed to correct the conditions or behaviors which resulted in the removal of her children.

The OKDHS recommended that a petition be filed to terminate the parental rights of Shana Suggs.

Prior Involvement with the Department of Human Services

The family had been previously involved with the Oklahoma Department of Human Services nine times. Two of these reports, (December 31, 2007 and January 3, 2008) were pertinent to the near-death incident because they involved allegations that a sibling had cigarette burns up and down the child's leg.

The OKDHS accepted one report as a Priority I Investigation. The other report was accepted as a Priority II Investigation with eight days in which to initiate contact with the children. The OKDHS documented that K.S. and the sibling were unable to be interviewed due to their developmental levels.

The OKDHS documented that the mother, Shana, denied ever burning the child with a cigarette. The OKDHS documented that other sources reported that the child had received cigarette burns from the mother. The OKDHS documented that due to conflicting information the worker was unable to determine if the child had been burned in the past as there were no burn marks observed during the investigation. The OKDHS made an overall finding of Services Recommended on these reports and encouraged the mother to follow through with play therapy for the sibling.

Judicial proceedings prior to the child's near-death incident

The OJSO identified no judicial proceedings prior to the near-death incident which would be pertinent to this report.