OKLAHOMA COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH
OFFICE OF JUVENILE SYSTEM OVERSIGHT

Report Release Date: December 26, 2019

Review of the Death of Zion Jones Of Tulsa County, Oklahoma

General Information

The Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) received a request for a public report regarding the death of Zion Jones. As a result of Zion's death, the Tulsa County District Attorney filed one felony count of Child Abuse Murder against the Person Responsible for Child (PRFC) Ashley Ledbetter, Zion's biological mother, on July 7, 2017. On March 26, 2018, Ashley Ledbetter waived her rights to a trial and pleaded guilty. The court accepted the plea and sentenced Ashley to Life in the Department of Corrections with forty (40) years in custody and the balance to be suspended. Ashley signed the rules and conditions to be supervised by probation and parole, and was also advised this is an 85% crime.

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: Zion Jones
Date of Birth: March 30, 2017
Date of Death: July 7, 2017
Sibling One: Six-years-old
Sibling Two: Sixteen-months-old
PRFC: Ashley Ledbetter, biological mother

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

Child Death Incident

On July 7, 2017, the OKDHS received a report that emergency personnel were called to the family home because Zion went into cardiac arrest after reportedly falling off a bed. The child was reportedly taken to a medical facility and, upon examination, was found to have a skull fracture, facial bruising, and severe injuries to several internal organs. The incident reportedly occurred on July 6, 2017, but was not reported to the OKDHS reporting system until July 7, 2017. The OKDHS accepted this report as a Priority I Investigation. When the Child Protective Services (CPS) worker initially responded to the medical facility on July 6, 2017, Zion was alive but in critical condition and on a ventilator. The OKDHS documented that law enforcement interviewed Ms. Ledbetter at the medical facility on July 6, 2017.

The OKDHS requested and received emergency custody of Sibling Two. Sibling One was in the legal custody of a relative at the time of the incident, therefore custody of Sibling One was not requested by the OKDHS. Zion passed away from his injuries the following day on July 7, 2017.

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner determined that the probable cause of Zion's death was multiple blunt impact injuries. The manner of death was listed as Homicide.

The OKDHS made a finding of Substantiated on the Child Death investigation.

Prior Involvement of the PRFC with the Oklahoma Department of Human Services

There were no pertinent prior reports regarding the PRFC and the Oklahoma Department of Human Services.

Judicial proceedings prior to the child's death incident

There were no pertinent judicial proceedings prior to the child's death incident.