

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
OFFICE OF THE CHILD ADVOCATE



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PRESS RELEASE

For Release on Tuesday June 13, 2017

The Office of the Child Advocate (hereinafter "OCA") is issuing this press release pursuant to *R.I.G.L. § 42-73-2.3*. The OCA is an independent, autonomous state agency tasked with the immense responsibility of protecting the legal rights of children involved with the Department of Children, Youth and Families, to promote policies and practices, which ensure that children are safe, that children have permanent and stable families, and that children in out of home placements have their physical, mental, medical, educational, emotional, and behavioral needs met. The OCA functions as the watchdog to the Department of Children, Youth and Families.

On April 5, 2017, the State's Child Advocate, Jennifer Griffith, announced that she convened her second panel of community professionals to conduct a multidisciplinary review of the near fatality of a three (3) month old child and another near fatality of a five (5) month old child.

The OCA is issuing this press release to announce that the Child Fatality Review Panel will be adding a third case to the already pending review. The OCA received notice from the Department of Children, Youth and Families of a recent near fatality of a two (2) year-old child. Although this case is classified as a near fatality pursuant to Rhode Island General Law, at no point was the child involved "near death". However, this case falls within the scope of the OCA's statutory authority; the OCA may complete a review of a fatality or near fatality when a sibling, household member, or day care provider has been the subject of a child abuse and neglect investigation within the previous twelve (12) months. Due to significant risk factors present in this case and the family's prior and recent contact with the Department of Children, Youth and Families, the OCA found it pertinent to review this matter.

Upon the conclusion of the review, the Office of the Child Advocate will issue a public report outlining the panel's findings and recommendations, without identifying the children or families involved in the cases under review.