

Child Fatality Review #08-44
Region 4
King County

This four-month-old Caucasian female died from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) while in a licensed child care facility.

Case Overview

On August 5, 2008, the deceased child died on her first day at the child care provider's home. According to the Medical Examiner's report, the child care provider placed the child in a crib at 1:00 p.m., checked on her a half hour later and the infant was unresponsive. The provider placed the deceased child on her stomach. The infant was found in that position. This death was certified as a SIDS fatality. The King County Medical Examiner reported no trauma and no foul play was suspected. However, the provider had the crib in an area of the house that had not been included in the license and had not followed Department of Early Learning (DEL) protocol by sleeping the infant directly on her back. The DEL licensor wrote a compliance plan with the provider and helped her obtain bereavement support. The licensor's initial plan was to write a compliance agreement and issue a probationary license. However, due to the provider's lack of cooperation, the SIDS death and potential risk to other children, DEL summarily suspended the provider's license with intent to revoke.

Referral History

On January 8, 2008, a former child care employee contacted Child Protective Services (CPS) intake and reported a two-year-old child in the child care accidentally locked himself in a room. The child care director was away from the home. The child fell asleep. The referrer suggested calling 911 or a locksmith. The child care director/owner did not want to call 911 or pay for a locksmith. A locksmith was eventually called and opened the door. The child was in the room for over four hours. He slept most of the time. This referral was screened out for investigation by CPS. It was screened in as a licensing complaint investigation and closed with a Not Valid finding.

Issues and Recommendations

Issue: WAC 170-296-1060 mandates that child care providers follow the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) for putting infants down to sleep. Licensors address this with providers during in-home or in-center orientation as part of the licensing process. Specific SIDS training is not included in the contracted State Training and Registry System (STARS).

Recommendation: The Northwest Infant Survival Alliance - SIDS Foundation of Washington (NISA-SIDS) - has a training curriculum specifically for child care providers. DEL should consider ways of making this available to providers.