



STATE OF DELAWARE
CHILD PROTECTION ACCOUNTABILITY COMMISSION

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February 19, 2026

The Honorable Matthew Meyer
Office of the Governor
820 N. French Street, 12th Floor
Wilmington, DE 19801

RE: Reviews of Child Deaths and Near Deaths Due to Abuse or Neglect

Dear Governor Meyer:

As one of its many statutory duties, the Child Protection Accountability Commission (“CPAC”) is responsible for the review of child deaths and near-deaths due to abuse or neglect. In calendar year 2025, CPAC accepted 66 cases for review (12 deaths and 54 near-deaths) and screened out 132 cases.

As required by law, CPAC approved findings from 17 cases at its February 18, 2026, meeting.¹ These cases are divided into two sections – cases that received a final review after completion of prosecution and cases that were reviewed for the first time.

This quarter, nine cases received a final review. These were deaths and near-deaths that occurred between January 2023 and March 2025. Three of the nine cases resulted in charges, and one of those cases involved two defendants, for a total of four charged individuals. Of the four defendants, there were a total of three convictions; one of the defendants received probation, two received Level V incarceration, and one defendant passed away prior to criminal resolution. One defendant, who was convicted of Child Abuse 1st, of a one-year-old victim, received a two-year jail sentence. In another case, involving child torture of a five-year-old victim, the defendant was convicted of Child Abuse 3rd, felony Endangering the Welfare of a Child, and Conspiracy 2nd, and received a four-year jail sentence. CPAC and its committees continue to focus on outcomes in these serious child abuse cases, and continue to work to improve timely decision making, civil and criminal collaboration, presentence investigations, and the provision of victim impact statements. These final reviews resulted in two additional findings and one additional strength.

¹ 16 Del.C. §932.

The eight remaining cases are from deaths or near-deaths that occurred between May and July 2025. Of these cases, two near-deaths will have no further review and were not prosecuted- these cases include poisoning via drug ingestion and bilateral skull fractures.

There are six cases- one death and five near-deaths- that will remain open pending prosecutorial outcomes. These cases involve unsafe sleep, skull fracture/brain bleed, medical child abuse, medical neglect, and poisoning via drug ingestion.

For the eight cases from May to July 2025, there were 13 strengths and 22 findings across system areas. Four strengths and three findings were noted for the Multidisciplinary Team Response. These results reflect continued progress in strengthening multidisciplinary collaboration and frontline investigative expertise.

Five strengths and 16 findings were identified regarding the Division of Family Services (“DFS”). Five of the findings related to caseloads, and two involved safety concerns. The remaining nine involved collateral contacts, incorrect risk assessments, and unresolved risk at the time of case closure. No additional trends were identified in the other findings this quarter.

For the medical response, this quarter demonstrated four strengths and three findings. Two of those findings indicate breakdowns in reporting cases to the DFS report line by the treating hospitals. This shows improvement in reporting this past quarter and may be reflective of the 2025 recognition and reporting training for medical professionals which emphasized identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect.

The number, complexity, and severity of child abuse cases remain high. The multidisciplinary team continues to strengthen its expertise and response to these matters, as reflected in the identified strengths. For your reference, we have included the strengths, findings, and detailed summaries of all cases discussed in this letter. In addition, the CPAC Data Dashboards and summaries of CAN findings and drug ingestions are provided to offer a comprehensive view of the volume and complexity of child welfare cases in Delaware over time. CPAC remains available and prepared to answer any further questions you may have.

Respectfully,



Kelly C. Ensslin, Esquire
Executive Director
Child Protection Accountability Commission

Enclosures

Cc: CPAC Commissioners, General Assembly

Child Protection Accountability Commission
Child Abuse and Neglect Panel
Findings Summary

<u>INITIAL REVIEWS</u>	
MDT Response	<u>3</u>
General - Criminal/Civil Investigation	1
Reporting	2
Medical	<u>4</u>
Medical Exam/ Standard of Care - ED	2
Reporting	2
Risk Assessment/ Caseloads	<u>11</u>
Caseloads	5
Collaterals	2
Reporting	1
Risk Assessment - Alternative Response	1
Risk Assessment - Tools	2
Safety/ Use of History/ Supervisory Oversight	<u>2</u>
Safety - Inappropriate Parent/ Relative Component	1
Safety - Oversight of Agreement	1
Unresolved Risk	<u>3</u>
Contacts with Family	1
Parental Risk Factors	2
Grand Total	<u>23</u>

<u>FINAL REVIEWS</u>	
Risk Assessment/ Caseloads	<u>2</u>
Caseloads	1
Risk Assessment - Tools	1
Grand Total	<u>2</u>

TOTAL CAN PANEL FINDINGS

25

**Child Protection Accountability Commission
Child Abuse and Neglect Panel
Strengths Summary**

INITIAL REVIEWS	
	Current
MDT Response	4
General - Criminal Investigation	2
Medical Exam	2
Medical	4
Medical Exam/Standard of Care - ED	2
Medical Exam/Standard of Care - Forensics	1
Reporting	1
Risk Assessment/ Caseloads	2
Collaterals	1
Risk Assessment - Alternative Response	1
Safety/ Use of History/ Supervisory Oversight	1
Use of History	1
Unresolved Risk	2
Child Risk Factors	1
Contacts with Family	1
Grand Total	<u>13</u>

FINAL REVIEWS	
Medical	1
Documentation	1
Grand Total	<u>1</u>

TOTAL CAN PANEL STRENGTHS

14