Erica Parsons Media Statement

CPS report received 3-12-02 @ 10:17 am.

Allegations: Allegations that Mom had beaten child who presented with marks on her buttocks, one on the back of her leg and a couple on the side of her face. Child will not eat for mom and only weighs 23 lbs. Mom has her sit at table for 2 hours to try to get her to eat. Mom reports child is adopted and mom does not love her.

DSS Actions: DSS notified Rowan County Sheriff’s Dept. and Detective and Social Worker responded to the home with immediate response time. All children and parents were seen and interviewed. Safety plan entered 3-12-02 with parents agreeing to use alternate forms of discipline such as timeout and grounding. Parents further agreed not to leave any marks or bruises from spanking and to provide safe stable home for children. 5 collaterals were interviewed.

SW interviewed Erica. Child presented as small 4 year old weighing 41 lbs. Body inventory was completed and no marks or bruises were found other than a small scratch on face. All children in the home were observed and interviewed. None had marks or bruises. All denied any maltreatment of Erica or themselves.

Interview with parents revealed that Erica was adopted through a neighboring County DSS by Casey and Sandy Parsons when she was 4 weeks old. Parents reported that Erica has always been small and her biological parents are very small. Erica eats but not a lot at one time. Boost weight gain drinks are provided to Erica. Doctor is aware of Erica’s weight and child is current with immunizations. Parents report family conflict due to an aunt wanting Erica.

An aunt clarified that Erica had “red marks” from a whipping. Discord among extended family members was evident. Maternal Grandmother reported that children are not abused. Medical records from Pediatrician show pattern of medical care to Erica sought by parents (ear infections, concern over low weight and notation of small birth parents 5’2” 98 lbs, developmental delays). Medical records were reviewed with the following findings:

1. Premature birth with respiratory distress. 34 weeks gestation. Birthweight 4lb 7 oz

2. bilateral tube insertion due to otitis media and conductive hearing loss 10-02

Adoptions SW expressed no concern about Casey and Sandy’s parenting or bonding. Detective closed abuse report as unfounded. Risk assessment rating was Low. DSS unsubstantiated and closed case on 4/22/02.

CPS report received 6-29-04 @ 1:17 PM

Allegations: Parents brought children to beach. Erica was on punishment and had to sit for extended time. She was not allowed to play at the arcade. She ate a sandwich and said she was going to throw up. Father allegedly yelled at her, saying ugly things about not caring if she eats any more of his food. Mother said child was not going to get up at night to get food. Child is very tiny and frail. Concern over mother not wanting the child and tried to give her away.

DSS Actions: DSS notified Rowan County Sheriff Department. SW responded to the home within mandated 24 hours. All parents and children were observed and interviewed. Safety plan entered 6-30-04 with parents agreeing to seek medical attention if child continues to have eating problems or does not advance developmentally. Both parents deny ever threatening to take food away and agreed not to use withholding of food as a punishment.

Parents report they use time out and loss of privileges and grounding as punishment. They deny using any corporal punishment. Both report they “holler” and would rather raise their voices than whip the children. Both parents report paternal family angry with them because they would not allow Erica to stay at beach with them. Erica had dropped a pitcher of tea in the refrigerator at 2 am and did not clean it up. PGM had fixed Erica a ham and cheese sandwich and gave her 12 oz soda, expecting child to drink it all. Father reports Erica will throw up food if it is something she doesn’t like. She sees a doctor in Concord for gastro issues (becomes nauseous when tummy is full). Parents report all kids are “good”. Parents report that family will call DSS if they become angry with parents. They state they have never tried to give Erica away.

DSS SW requested mother to make therapy appointment for Erica.

SW interviewed Erica alone. She presented as small for her age. She reported that when she does something bad she has time out or doesn’t get to do certain things. If she does something really bad, she reports she might get a whipping. She denies receiving any marks. She reports that she likes to eat macaroni and pizza. Child was clean and appropriately dressed. Older siblings report loss of privileges or time out in room as punishment. They, too, report they may receive a whipping if they do something really bad. SW observed Erica to present as well bonded with both parents.

Child medical evaluation conducted by pediatrician. Ear, Nose & Throat visit was recommended due to tube being out of Erica’s left ear. A follow up with endocrinologist was recommended due to child being below 5th percentile for height and weight. Exam noted possible congenital infections which would explain hearing loss, smallness and learning disabilities. Child had 2 large abrasions around ankles. Both child and mother report marks from old sandals. Evidence did not support medical neglect. Doctor recommended monitoring by pediatrician every 3 months for height and weight and follow up with endocrinologist.

Collaterals report no knowledge of withholding food or inappropriate discipline. Have heard parents telling child she is stupid.

Review of medical records show some missed wellness exams and a missed follow up appointment with endocrinologist and pediatric gastroenterologist (last seen 9/03). Immunizations were up to date. Bone age and thyroid tests were normal. There was documentation of child not eating well at school. Developmental evaluation was completed. Erica was fitted with hearing aids 5/03.

Mother went into premature labor and placed Erica with aunt 7-26-04 because mom was placed on bed rest until baby is born.

Risk assessment was moderate for neglect and abuse. Case decision was to substantiate neglect due to necessary medical/remedial care was not provided. Case was transferred to Case Planning and Management for on-going services on 8-3-04.

Child was placed with maternal aunt, in neighboring County.

Services provided: SW assessed home of maternal aunt, assisted in getting child enrolled in new school system, obtained notarized statement from Casey Parsons allowing aunt to seek medical care for child, enroll child in school and to receive Erica’s adoption assistance checks. Neighboring County DSS continued working with aunt to obtain Power of Attorney for child and to pursue guardianship.

CPS report received 7-31-13 @ 8:45 AM.

Information from the investigation of Erica’s disappearance must be withheld due to pending criminal prosecution.