

CHILDSTAT Case Summary

OUTLINE

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2:20pm. The whereabouts of the other family members was unknown.”

Current Contacts

<u>Home Visits</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Children Seen</u>	<u>Children Removed</u>
Successful		yes	no
Successful		yes	no

Person(s) Not Interviewed/Observed:

Collaterals Not Contacted: Pediatrician, neighbors, maternal aunt, maternal grandmother

Legal Status

N/A

Reports

Total Prior CPS Cases: 0

Placement History

N/A

History of Assistance

N/A

Family Background

Thirty-one year old Elizabeth R and 30-year old Joe B are the parents of two children, 8-year old Joy and 6-year old Danny. The family is of Columbian descent and all are U.S. citizens. English is their primary language. The couple’s marital status is not known or how and when they met. Joe has been employed for a rehabilitation center for the past 7 years and he earns \$600.00 a week. The family is not in receipt of public assistance or food stamps. Elizabeth plans to return to her position as a nanny at the end of the month.

The family resides in a two-bedroom rent-stabilized apartment that consists of one bathroom, a living room and a kitchen. The children share one bedroom that is furnished with two twin-size beds. The parents’ room has a queen-size bed. The home is equipped with a carbon monoxide and a smoke detector. The monthly rent expense is \$750. The family receives medical coverage through GHI. The parents denied any domestic violence, substance abuse, or problems with their physical and mental health.

The parents receive familial support from the children’s maternal grandmother and their maternal aunt, Sally, Elizabeth’s older sister. (Several times during the CPSS II’s documented reviews of the investigation, she made references to the family residing with the “paternal grandmother” for 7 years. However, the family resided with the maternal grandmother for 7 years and there is no

other documentation in Connections to support any involvement of the children's paternal grandmother in the current investigation.)

Joy

Joy is an 8-year old girl with a brown skin complexion, brown eyes and black hair. She weighs about 52 pounds and is 50 inches tall. Joy is a second grader at PS 001. Joy has asthma and uses Albuterol to treat her condition. She has no other reported medical conditions or problems with her mental health. Joy repeated the first grade and is currently failing all subjects in school. It is not clear if Joy is currently enrolled in 1st or 2nd grade as there is conflicting information documented in Connections.

Danny

Danny is 6-years old and is about 43 inches tall and approximately 40 pounds. He has a brown skin complexion and brown hair and eyes. Danny attends Kindergarten at PS 001 and he is doing well in all of his school subjects. He has no reported medical and mental health conditions.

Criminal History/Domestic Incident Reports (DIRs)

There are no DIRs or criminal clearances located for the family.

Child Protective History

The parents did not appear to be the subjects of any prior investigations by Children's Services.

Current Investigation

Queens Borough Office

The SCR assigned the report to the Queens Borough Office on 04/11/2011 at 2:52 p.m.

Investigation

Applications Unit activities

On 04/11, the Child Welfare Specialist Supervisor I in Applications documented the results of the family's clearances that were obtained from Connections, ACRS+, WMS and public assistance.

Attempted contact with the source

On 04/11, the CPS called the source and was informed that she had left for the day. The CPS noted that she would follow-up with the source the next day.

Initial home visit

The CPS visited the family's home on 04/11 and provided the parents with the Notices of Existence. She assessed the living conditions in the home and found there to be enough food and that there was a carbon monoxide/smoke detector installed. The CPS held interviews with both parents and the two children; although it is not clear if the interview with each family member was held privately.

Elizabeth's account

Elizabeth told the CPS that she knew the reason for the CPS's visit was because of the children's many absences and tardiness. She said that she went to school on that Friday (4/8?) for a conference. Elizabeth admitted that she tended to be lenient on the children, allowing them to stay up until 10 p.m. and as a result they would wake up late. Elizabeth added that she kept the children home on bad weather days and whenever they told her they did not feel well. According to Elizabeth, the children would "always" tell her that they did not feel well. Elizabeth mentioned that when the family resided down the street from the school, their attendance was not a problem. She explained that she was unable to enroll them in the school located across the street from their home because the school year was well underway. She planned to enroll them there in the upcoming year. The CPS inquired about the children's lateness; Elizabeth blamed the bus for being behind schedule and causing their lateness. Elizabeth said that she planned to work on resolving the issue by putting the children to bed by 8 p.m., waking them by 6 a.m., and leaving home by 6:30 a.m. She further reported that to avoid wasting time, she allowed the children to eat breakfast in school.

The CPS spoke to the mother about her outlook on education. Elizabeth stated that she stopped attending school after the 9th grade and did not obtain her GED. She said that she did not have an opportunity to complete high school or anyone in her life to ensure that she did. Elizabeth wanted more for her children than what she had. The mother was interested in having Joy evaluated because she observed that her daughter often would not retain information that was explained to her and that she could possibly have a learning disability. According to Elizabeth, when she approached Joy's teacher about her concerns, the teacher told the mother that she should consider getting her children to school on time. Elizabeth expressed that she had a right to request that Joy be evaluated. Furthermore, Elizabeth reported that her request for a tutor to assist Joy was denied, as the school told her that one could not be provided. Elizabeth explained that Joy had a tutor when the family lived at their prior residence. Her request for bus pick-up for Joy was also denied as the bus service was reserved for children with special needs. Elizabeth said that she assisted the children with their homework. The CPS advised the mother that she planned to arrange a school conference to discuss options about Joy's education.

Joe's account

The CPS engaged the father in a conversation about his role at home and as the children's father. He said that on his days off, he repaired and organized things around the apartment or would take the children to the park. Joe added that he also liked to bake with the children when he had time off from work. The CPS inquired about the children's morning routine and Joe disclosed that Elizabeth woke the children since he was already on his way to work by 5:30 a.m. Joe said that he would wake the children and take them to school whenever he was off from work. Joe admitted that he was aware of the children's poor attendance records that have impacted on their educational growth. He indicated that the children's tardiness was due to the late buses and that the problem was resolved because the children would get up earlier and arrive at the bus stop earlier. The father said he spoke to Elizabeth regarding her tendency to allow the children to miss school because they said they did not feel well. Joe reported that he graduated from high school and believed that education was very important. He assisted the children with homework and ensured that the assignments were done correctly. Joe was also interested in having Joy evaluated and requested the CPS's help in obtaining his daughter's educational assessment. The CPS informed him that she would contact the school to arrange a conference. Joe reported that

when disciplining his children, he talked to them and would occasionally spank them. He denied use of any drugs and reported that he drank alcohol on occasion.

Joy's account

Joy said that she was in the second grade and that she enjoyed school. She further stated that she has a "special" teacher that she meets with for the day. Joy did not care for her teacher because she said that he did not teach her how to do her work correctly. Joy said that she liked to run, read and that her favorite book was *Peter Pan*. The CPS asked the child about how school had been for her. She responded by saying that school was good but that she was responsible for getting her mother into trouble. Joy said that she "did that" because she did not like waking up early and waiting for the bus. She reasoned that she planned to go to bed earlier because she did not want to get her mother in trouble and because she wanted a good job one day. She added that her parents lectured her on the importance of attending school and having a good job. She indicated that her father assisted her with homework and made sure that she completed it correctly.

Joy said that her parents have argued but she had never witnessed them hit each other. She added that her father drank alcohol sometimes and that she never saw drugs in the home. She reported that her parents disciplined her by telling her to stop her behavior. She denied being touched inappropriately or being asked to do something she did not want to do.

Danny's account

The CPS engaged the child in a conversation about what he learned in gym class and how much he liked his teacher because she was pretty. Danny shared with the CPS that he made a humpback whale which he planned to show her on her next visit. The child also reported that he had quite a few friends in school. The CPS then asked Jaden about how late he would go to bed. The child shared with the CPS that he used to go to bed at 10 p.m. and now at 8 p.m. Danny further stated that it was still dark outside when he woke up and that he also ate breakfast in school. The child told the CPS that his mother spoke to him and his sister about not being late to school any longer and that they had to attend school every day. He admitted that there were times that he stayed home when he was not sick. Danny denied witnessing fights between his parents or that he was hit by either of them. However, the child said that as a form of discipline, he would receive spankings and would cry as a result. He also denied inappropriate touching by anyone or being made to do anything he did not want to do.

Attempted contact with the source

The CPS called the source in the morning on 04/12 and was told that she was out to lunch. The CPS offered to call back. She called the source later that afternoon and was informed that the source had left for the day.

Case activities

On 04/12, the CPS faxed a HIPPA form to the Helping Hands Hospital pediatric clinic. On 04/13, the CPS requested criminal and DIR clearances from the Investigative Consultant and learned that the family did not have histories of criminal behavior or DIRs. A doctor from Helping Hands Hospital responded to the CPS by fax on 04/13 and indicated that the children had only been seen in the hospital's emergency room.

School contacts

On 04/13, the CPS called the children's Guidance Counselor and left a message requesting information regarding the children's school progress. On 04/14, the CPS faxed the student assessment request form to PS 001. On 04/15, she received a phone message from Joy's teacher who requested that the CPS return her call. The teacher provided the CPS with an alternative phone number where she could be reached.

Collateral contact with the maternal grandmother

On 04/18, the CPS attempted to call Betty B, the children's maternal grandmother; later that day, she was successful in contacting Betty. The maternal grandmother told the CPS that the family moved out of her home after residing with her for seven years. According to Betty, the parents wanted to "do things on their own." Betty regarded Elizabeth and Joe as great parents and she had no concerns about the family. Betty reported that she visited with the children at their home on a weekly basis and knew about their tardiness. Betty reasoned that the long distance between the school and the family's home was a factor and that Elizabeth attempted to resolve the problem by adjusting the children's schedules. The maternal grandmother further stated that she supported the parents with anything they needed and she offered her availability should the CPS have needed it.

7-Day Safety Assessment

On 04/18, the CPS completed the 7-Day Safety Assessment and submitted it to the CPSS II for his approval. The CPS chose Safety Decision #1 "No Safety Factors were identified at this time. Based on currently available information, there is no child(ren) likely to be in immediate or impending danger of serious harm. No Safety Plan/Controlling Interventions are necessary at this time." She selected the Safety Factor #19 "No Safety Factors present at this time." The CPS noted that "There are no safety factors. There is not a pattern of excessive absences and lateness." She further indicated that Elizabeth's request for bus service to ensure that the children arrived to school on time was denied; and she had since made changes to her schedule to accommodate them.

Contact with the source

The CPS spoke to the source on the phone on 04/18. The source told the CPS that Joy was a well-behaved child and did not act out in school. However, she indicated that the child had an ongoing problem with her attendance. The source suspected that Joy had a problem with comprehension and she recommended that the child be evaluated and possibly attend summer school. She planned to hold a meeting when school resumed from break as Joy was failing all of her subjects and had already repeated the first grade. Regarding Danny's academic progress, the source indicated that the child was doing well and not failing any subjects.

Borough Office visit

On 04/26, Elizabeth and the children met the CPS in the Queens Borough Office. The CPS held interviews with Elizabeth and both children, but it was not specified whether the interviews were held separately and privately.

Joy reported that she was enjoying her vacation from school by having her friends over, playing games at home, and spending time with her father at the park. The CPS spoke to the girl about

what she observed when her father drank. Joy said that her father drank what looked like water but was actually alcohol. She said she knew that alcohol was in his glass because her father told her so. Joy said that her father danced sometimes when he drank alcohol but he did not act funny. The CPS asked the child how often she went to Ms. M's classroom and the child answered that she went on a daily basis for the entire day. Joy further indicated that she did not like Ms. M; however, she did not elaborate on her feelings. Joy disclosed that her parents spanked her whenever she got into trouble and that they used an open hand or a shoe to spank her on her buttocks. The child told the CPS that she knew that her school absences were not her fault and that her mother told her that "it was" her fault.

Danny told the CPS that he too was having a good vacation and that he enjoyed sleeping late. He said that he also enjoyed going to the park with his father, and that he was excited that he was going to see a movie with him some time that week. Danny disclosed that his parents spanked him on his buttocks with a hand or a flip-flop sandal; however, he was never bruised. He said that Joy also received spankings.

Elizabeth informed the CPS that she attended the school conference on 04/08 and was told by the teacher (not specifically named) that she was a bad mother. Elizabeth further stated that the teacher said that she (the mother) needed an evaluation because there was something wrong with her. Elizabeth explained that she kept her children home from school because she believed them when they told her that they were ill. Elizabeth recognized that her actions were wrong as it impacted on the children's ability to perform better in school. The mother said she planned to submit to the school a request for an IEP for Angelina the following day. The CPS inquired about the children's pediatrician; and Elizabeth informed her that she was searching for one. According to Elizabeth, the children had their physicals completed by the school's doctor. Elizabeth stated that she was planning to return to work as a nanny on 05/29.

Collateral contact with the Guidance Counselor

On 04/29, the CPS spoke to the children's Guidance Counselor in a phone conversation about the family. The Guidance Counselor said that she spoke to the parents several times about the children's attendance and Joy's grades. According to the Guidance Counselor, Elizabeth visited the school the day before and requested in writing that Joy be evaluated. The school planned to follow through with the mother's request and a conference at the school was scheduled for 05/03.

Later in the day, the Guidance Counselor faxed the CPS a record of Joy's grades which indicated that the child was performing below level and scored "1" (lowest score) in all of her subjects. Danny's school report indicated that he presented as "lethargic and tired"; however, it is not clear if this was a description based on an ongoing or a one-time observation of the child. The report also inferred that Danny's poor attendance and excessive late occurrences could be inflicting on his performance in school as he was assessed as being smart with an ability to learn quickly. Other remarks in the report were that Danny did not complete homework assignments regularly and he talked out of turn and "rough houses"; however, he responded well to authority. He was said to be able to focus and listen when he was not tired. Danny earned a "3" (on a scale of 1-4) in all of his subjects.

School conference

The CPS went to the school conference on 05/03 for the purpose of discussing the children's attendance and academic performance. Also in attendance were the Guidance Counselor, the parents, the Principal and Joy's teacher. The children were said to be "improving" in their attendance and completing their homework assignments. The need for Joy to have a hearing test, a physical, and an evaluation for special education were discussed. It was also recommended that the child attend the extended day program and improve her reading level.

Home visit

On 05/09, the CPS visited the home and met with Elizabeth and the children. The home was neat and clean and there was an adequate supply of food observed. The mother provided the CPS with the name and contact information for the pediatrician whom she took the children to see. She said that the children had full physicals and that Joy's hearing was tested. She also reported that Danny burned his face on a lamp in his room when he tried to change the light bulb. Elizabeth explained that her son picked up the lamp in an attempt to bring it to her and he leaned into it. She said that Danny was seen by the pediatrician who said that the child was okay. Elizabeth was expecting the results from Joy's hearing exam and planned to take them to the children's school.

The CPS spoke with Joy who reported that school was good and that she was completing her homework assignments every night. Joy said that she visited the doctor in the previous week. The child told the CPS that her brother, Danny, burned himself on a lamp when he attempted to fix a light bulb that blew out. She said that Danny's teacher told him that he needed to help his mother more and so her brother wanted to fix the light bulb. Joy said that the lamp hit Danny in his face, but he did not cry. Joy denied that her parents have been arguing.

The CPS also spoke with Danny about the burn mark on his face. The child told the CPS that he had a lamp in his room that he picked up in order to help his mom with changing the bulb. Danny said that his teacher told him that he must always help. The light bulb hit Danny's face when he picked up the lamp which the CPS described as a 7-inch desk lamp. The light bulb in the lamp was small and its size was comparable to the dime-size scab seen on the child's left cheek. The CPS did not observe any other marks or bruises on the children.

Clinical Consultation Team

On 05/13, the CPS sought assistance from the Domestic Violence and Medical Consultants. The domestic violence consultation was scheduled for 05/18. The CPS planned to meet with the Medical Consultant that afternoon on 05/13.

Risk Assessment Profile (RAP)

On 05/13, the CPS completed the RAP and submitted it to the CPSS II for approval. The Preliminary Risk Score was "1" and the Preliminary and Final Risk Ratings scored "low." The CPS acknowledged that the parents had support from the maternal grandmother and each other. The assessment indicated that the parents did not "demonstrate developmentally appropriate expectations of all children" The CPS noted that the parents allowed the children to remain home and did not seek medical treatment when they complained of being sick. The assessment further indicated that the parents did not "attend to needs of all children and prioritizes the children's needs above his/her own needs or desires." The CPS noted that the parents did not send the

children to school when the bus was late or change their daily routine until Children's Services had become involved. The Supervisor's approval is still pending as of this writing.

Local Protocol

As directed by her CPSS II, the CPS documented in the Local Protocol that she screened for Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse and found no indications that either safety factors were present in the home.

Supervision

Pre-Investigation Conference

The CPSS II held a face-to-face conference with the CPS on 4/11 to discuss the preliminary information regarding the SCR report. The CPSS II pointed out that the concerns were Joy's academic issues and how her attendance problem has had an impact. Another concern was the parents' response to the problem. The Supervisor hypothesized that the parents did not view education as being important or that they had difficulty in transporting the children to school because of financial reasons. The Supervisor noted that the family did not have prior investigations with Children's Services. The CPSS II provided the CPS with a series of questions to seek answers for, which included, but were not limited to, if there was a school meeting held, if Joy had an evaluation being that she was repeating first grade, and if the parents had a conference at the school. The Supervisor also directed the CPS to visit the home in the evening and inquire about the parents' outlook on education, their educational backgrounds, their cultural beliefs, and their contact with the school regarding the children's attendance. The CPSS II also inquired if the children had a medical reason for their absences. The CPSS II further reminded the CPS of the need to interview neighbors and the landlord about their possible concerns. Other guidance included the CPS's use of internal resources such as the Clinical Consultation Team and the Investigative Consultant.

48-Hour Review

There was no 48-Hour Review and guidance documented.

5-Day Review

The CPSS II reviewed the investigation on 04/18 and noted that the review was for the purpose of approving the 7-Day Safety Assessment. She acknowledged the number of late occurrences and absences that Joy had and that the family was not known to Children's Services in the past. She further noted that the parents blamed the distance from the school and the bus transportation as deterrents to the children's attendance. The Supervisor provided the CPS with additional follow-ups which included, but were not limited to, verifying that the children's attendance had improved as the parents reported, suggesting that the parents submit their request for Joy's evaluation in writing to the school, to exploring and probing for more information about Joy's teacher and her dislike for her, and to inquire if the parents were aware that the teacher ignored their daughter. The Supervisor further suggested that the CPS visit the school and interview Joy's teacher to distinguish between the "special" teacher and her teacher, and to inquire of Joy what her father drank and his behavior when he drank. On 04/18, the CPSS II approved the 7-Day Safety Assessment.

Child Protective Manager (CPM) Review

On 04/19, the CPM reviewed the investigation and summarized the case activities in the investigation. She noted that her concern was that Joy held herself responsible for getting her mother into trouble because she did not want to go to school. The CPM added that the mother should have provided Joy with more structure regarding her school attendance. The CPS encouraged the CPS to discuss with the mother about how she should ensure that Joy understood that she was not to blame. She added that Elizabeth should take full responsibility for having not provided structure for her children. The CPM further urged the CPS to inquire more about Joy's exposure to her parents' arguments and how it might affect her. She also provided the CPS team with several follow-ups. They included, but were not limited to, discussing with the parents about finding a pediatrician for the children, exploring more about Danny's corporal punishment and whether he was bruised from his spankings, discussing with the parents their thoughts about keeping the children out of school despite Joy having already been held back in school, and following-up with a school conference and how the school could help the family. She also requested that the CPS make a collateral contact with the maternal aunt, Sally.

“25/30-Day” Review

On 05/10, the CPSS II reviewed the investigation and noted that the CPS followed-up with the previously allocated supervisory and managerial guidance. The Supervisor briefly summarized the CPS's findings and noted some updates regarding the children's progress in school. Regarding Joy's needs, the CPSS II indicated that the child would be evaluated since she would be “repeating the 1st grade for the second time” and that Joy was in need of a physical exam and a hearing test since she did not have a regular pediatrician. She wrote that Danny was doing well in school. The parents' last completed grade level was noted, and Joe was said to have not completed high school (contrary to his account on 04/11). The CPSS II also acknowledged the parents' attempt to ensure the children were in school on time. The Supervisor further acknowledged that the parents resided with the maternal grandmother for the past seven years; and she urged the CPS to explore with the parents how things had changed since then and what support they had.

The Supervisor also provided the CPS with a list of at least 22 follow-ups for the CPS to complete. They included, but were not limited to the following, documenting the maternal grandmother's contact information since she was contacted, inquiring about the children's last trip to the hospital ER where they received medical care, interviewing the school doctor, inquiring about scheduling Danny for a hearing and physical exam since his sister required them, and looking into health clinics in the community where the children could receive care since the parents were insured by GHI. Other directions included inquiring about the children's attendance records from their previous school, probing for more information regarding the parents' arguments and the father's drinking, exploring more about the parents' use of corporal punishment and seeing the shoe/flip flop they used to hit the children, counseling the parents about inappropriate uses of corporal punishment, asking Joy if her mother blamed her for the investigation, and following up with the status of Joy's evaluation.

The CPSS II directed the CPS to progress the case to an FSS and refer the family for PPRS by 05/13. She indicated that the family needed parenting skills training, family counseling and vocational assistance for Elizabeth. He also noted that domestic violence assistance was also a possibility. The Supervisor requested that the CPS update the case record to reflect the home visit made on 05/09 as directed during the supervisory conference held that day.

Supervisory conference

On 05/13, the CPSS II held a face-to-face conference with the CPS noting that the CPS was in training at the time of the supervisory review of the investigation on 05/10. The Supervisor told the CPS that she needed to document that she assessed the children for marks and bruises each time she visited. She also directed the CPS to explore the parents' relationship regarding their marital status and whether Elizabeth had primary care-giving responsibilities when the two resided with the maternal grandmother. The Supervisor also urged the CPS to explore the timeline around the family's relocation to their new address as there appeared to be a gap in question. The family moved in the summer; however, the parents did not request school transfers until February. The Supervisor instructed the CPS to make another home visit on 05/16 to complete the supervisory follow-up instructions. He also indicated that clearances were performed for the maternal grandmother and she did not have a history with Children's Services.