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DCYF too late for Kassidy

State tried to contact Evans' house just hours before baby's death



KASSIDY BORTNER
Victim of abuse



CHAD EVANS
Accused in murder

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ROCHESTER — The state's Division of Children, Youth and Families attempted to contact the family of Kassidy Bortner just hours before the child died.

The revelation came in court documents unsealed last week as a result of a challenge in late December from the Keene Sentinel newspaper. Evans was a longtime

Keene resident.

The documents claim that Chad E. Evans, 29, of 191 Milton Road in Rochester, who faces a second-degree murder charge in connection with Kassidy's death, received a telephone call from the agency on the morning of Nov. 9.

Investigators received information about the call from F. Jefferey Marshall, a Kittery, Maine, man who often baby-sat the toddler.

Shortly after noon that day, Kassidy was

rushed to the hospital from Marshall's home after he found her to be unresponsive. The 21-month-old child was later pronounced dead at the hospital.

Evans had lived with Kassidy and her mother, 18-year-old Amanda Bortner, at the time of the young girl's death.

He was indicted last month on a second-degree murder charge as well as two first-degree assault charges and six counts of second-degree assault. He pleaded innocent to all the charges Tuesday and is free

on \$100,000 corporate surety bail.

Following Kassidy's death, the Division of Children, Youth and Families would not confirm or deny that it had been contacted about possible abuse against Kassidy before she died. Again on Tuesday, John Wallace, associate commissioner of the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, said he could not com-

☆ **Kassidy**

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ment on the case.

"We are simply not at liberty to discuss details of referrals," Wallace said when asked if the state agency was notified of abuse allegations involving Kassidy before her death.

Although court documents indicate the state received a complaint about the situation and had started the initial stages of an investigation in early November, Wallace said he still "cannot discuss (the case) in any way." Wallace said the agency is not prepared to make an official statement about its involvement in the murder investigation.

He would not say when or why the Division of Children, Youth and Families became involved in the case.

Wallace did confirm if a call was made to the agency concerning Kassidy, the case would have been assigned to a protective worker and that an investigation would have begun within 72 hours of the initial call. In some cases, he said, a more immediate response is necessary.

Wallace would not say whether Kassidy's situation would have been declared an immediate concern.

Marshall told investigators that he had a telephone conversation with Evans on Nov. 9 just after

Bortner dropped Kassidy off at Marshall's house, according to the affidavit.

Marshall also noted that Evans asked him who made a complaint concerning Kassidy.

Evans also asked Marshall how Kassidy was, Marshall said in the court documents.

Preliminary autopsy results indicate Kassidy died as a result of blunt trauma to the head, but court documents detail a rash of alleged abuse against the 21-month-old.

Bortner and her daughter had lived with Evans for only a couple of months. In those two short months, Marshall and his girlfriend, Jennifer Conley, who is also the baby's aunt, saw a rapid decline — "a marked change," according to court documents — in what they described as a happy, playful baby.

They told investigators that Kassidy became "fearful and subdued and seemed somewhat reluctant to move about (the) home," according to court documents.

The baby suffered extensive bruising to her arms, stomach, chest, lips, temple, forehead and cheeks. She also started to have trouble walking.

Marshall and Conley claimed they often baby-sat for Kassidy

because Evans and Bortner were afraid other baby-sitters would report the child's injuries, according to court documents.

Marshall told investigators that Kassidy's injuries became so severe that he and Conley became reluctant to bring the baby out in public, according to the affidavit.

Marshall and Conley told investigators that when Kassidy arrived on Nov. 9, she was "completely covered with new bruises" and that her condition was worse than before, the affidavit said.

During two searches of Evans' home, authorities seized a number of bats and brushes, such as plastic grill brushes, wire dog brushes and various hair brushes.

Court documents indicate that multiple "pin prick marks" were found on the bottoms of Kassidy's feet, such as those that could be inflicted by hitting the girl on the bottom of the feet with some sort of brush.

Each year, about 6,500 children abuse cases are investigated in New Hampshire. Of those cases, about 800 children receive help from state agencies and an estimated 300 children are removed from their homes each year because of maltreatment.