

State report cites agency in death of toddler in foster care

BOSTON (AP) — A state report on the death of a 2-year-old girl in foster care says the Department of Children and Families failed to properly evaluate the qualifications of a foster mother and determine if the home was safe.

Gov. Charlie Baker on Thursday called the findings of the internal review “unacceptable” and said the case pointed to “systemic failures” in the child protection agency.

Authorities have said Avalena Conway-Coxon and an unidentified second toddler were found unresponsive Aug. 15 at an Auburn apartment complex. The second child was hospitalized in critical condition but survived.

The DCF says medical findings suggest the children suffered heat stroke.

Officials say two DCF employees have been reassigned as a result of the review.

A spokesman for the Worcester District Attorney’s office says a criminal investigation continues.

By BOB SALSBERG