

IS NURSERY TO BLAME?

Grieving parents
of two-and-a-
half-month-old
Brandon (right)
seek answers
to how he could
have suffocated
to death.

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What happened to our baby?

WHEN Vincent Teh, 32, and his wife first learnt that they were expecting a baby, they were overjoyed.

The couple, first-time parents, felt as if their dreams had been fulfilled when their son, Brandon, was born last November 15.

However, their world came crashing down on February 9 when their two-and-a-half month-old son died while in the care of a nursery. Now, the couple are demanding to know the circumstances surrounding their son's death.

Teh, an engineer, said they had registered with the nursery, located in Petaling Jaya, six months before their son was born.

"The nursery came highly recommended, and we had to book well in advance to secure a place.

"When we first met the nursery owner, she assured us that our baby was in good hands as she had a nursing background and was knowledgeable in nutrition," Teh told *Sunday Mail*.

"She also told us that she had a car to use in the event of any emergency."

Their doubts allayed, the couple signed a contract in which they had to pay RM650 a month for the childcare service.

Teh's wife, Rowena Yong, said everything went well until the day of the incident.

"On that day, I had dropped off Brandon at the nursery at around 8.45am before leaving for my office," she said.

"At around 5pm, I received a call from one of the nursery's workers,

telling me that the nursery owner had taken my son to the Assunta Hospital."

Yong said that while she was rushing to the hospital, she also received a call from the nursery owner. "She was crying, and told me that Brandon had defecated and vomited on her," she said.

When Yong arrived at the hospital at around 5.20pm, she was met by the nursery owner at the emergency ward.

"The doctor told me that my baby was pronounced dead at 5.07pm. He said my son was brought in at around 4.50pm and was clinically dead, after which they tried to revive him without success," she said.

"The doctor also said that milk sometimes enters a baby's lungs, causing breathing difficulty."

Yong said there were inconsistencies in the nursery owner's story when the woman called them much later.

"She said Brandon became ill at two o'clock, but later changed her mind and said four o'clock, instead. And when we went to the nursery the following Monday to collect our son's things, the nursery owner explained that on the day of the incident, Brandon had not been feeling well and she had massaged his stomach. She said when his situation became worse, she rushed to a neighbour's house to borrow a car and then rushed to the hospital."

Yong said she did not understand why the nursery owner did not call her as soon as Brandon became ill.

"My office is in the Petaling Jaya Industrial Park, a mere 15 minutes away. And she had claimed to have a car in case of emergencies. Why then did she have to borrow a neighbour's car to send my son to the hospital?"

"She also claimed to have a nursing background, but why did she not render any medical assistance?"

Yong said that on the day of the incident, the couple had asked for a post-mortem and Brandon's remains were then transferred to the University Hospital in Petaling Jaya for an autopsy.

"When we came to collect the results the next day, we were told that the cause of death was asphyxiation," she said, adding that hospital officials told them they would have to wait for up to a month to collect the full report.

Yong said she and her husband want to know what exactly transpired on the day of the incident.

"Despite raising the matter several times, we are no closer to finding out what happened. The nursery owner's stories have been inconsistent so far. We just want some closure. It is important that we know what happened that day."

The couple has lodged a report at the Petaling Jaya police station on the death of their son. A police spokesman has confirmed receiving the report.

Meanwhile, when contacted, the nursery owner declined comment. "I would like to respect the couple's privacy and prefer to keep it between us," she said.