

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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Office of Leavenworth County Attorney Todd Thompson

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### **Leavenworth man sentenced in fentanyl-related death of 3-year-old child**

LEAVENWORTH, Kan. — A 35-year-old Leavenworth man has been sentenced to prison in connection with the fentanyl-related death of a 3-year-old boy.

Kenneth C. Hedgecock was sentenced Wednesday, April 1, 2026, to 120 months on count one, involuntary manslaughter, and 18 months on count two, aggravated endangering a child. The sentences will run consecutively to one another and consecutive to all prior sentences he is currently serving.

Hedgecock previously pleaded no contest on March 2, 2026, to one count of involuntary manslaughter and one count of aggravated endangering a child and was found guilty on both counts.

Hedgecock, along with 40-year-old Tara A. Huerta and 30-year-old Briana R.M. Davis, was charged in connection with the March 26, 2025, death of Davis' 3-year-old child, who was in the care of Hedgecock and Huerta at the time of the incident.

All three defendants have now been convicted in this case.

According to court documents, a Leavenworth Police Department officer was dispatched at approximately 4:32 a.m. to an apartment near Limit Street and Martin Luther King Drive for a first-aid assist. Upon arrival, officers observed the victim, a 3-year-old child, lying on the living room floor while emergency responders performed chest compressions. The child was transported to an area hospital in Leavenworth by paramedics, where the victim was pronounced dead.

During the investigation, officers contacted Huerta and Hedgecock. Huerta told police that Davis had been at the apartment on March 25 and left the victim in their care. The child had been sleeping on the couch.

Huerta and Hedgecock admitted to using drugs while the child was inside the apartment. They told investigators that around midnight on March 26, they noticed the child was breathing differently and appeared to be having a bad dream. Hedgecock yelled the child's name, and the child briefly opened his eyes before going back to sleep.

Hedgecock later told investigators that at approximately 4:20 a.m., he woke to check on the child and realized something was wrong. He woke Huerta, and the two observed that the child was no longer breathing. They then called 911.

Investigators collected multiple items of evidence from the apartment, which were submitted to the Kansas Bureau of Investigation crime laboratory for testing. Swabs taken from the couch where the child had been sleeping tested positive for methamphetamine and fentanyl. A small baggie with residue found under the couch tested positive for methamphetamine, cocaine and fentanyl. A corner tie recovered from a couch cup holder tested positive for methamphetamine.

An autopsy determined the victim's cause of death was acute fentanyl toxicity.

Leavenworth County Attorney Todd Thompson said, "With all three defendants now convicted, this case highlights the serious risks fentanyl poses, especially to children. Careless actions can have tragic consequences, including the loss of an innocent child's life. When adults bring these substances into a home, they put others at risk."