# Nursery deputy manager jailed for 14 years after baby’s death sparks calls for nationwide safety reforms



In a profound tragedy for a family, nine-month-old Genevieve Zofia Meehan lost her life under the care of individuals entrusted with her safety. Genevieve’s untimely death occurred at Tiny Toes Nursery in Cheadle Hulme, Stockport, in May 2022, leading to a criminal trial that revealed disturbing details about her final moments. Kate Roughley, a nursery worker and deputy manager, has been sentenced to 14 years in prison after being convicted of manslaughter by ill-treatment. The court found that Roughley swaddled Genevieve and placed her face down on a bean bag for over an hour, a position that ultimately contributed to her death by asphyxiation.

This heart-wrenching incident has sparked a wider conversation regarding safety standards in nursery environments. During the trial, evidence was presented that suggested Roughley had exhibited hostility towards Genevieve in the days leading up to her death, raising serious concerns about staff conduct and the adequacy of training provided to nursery employees. The implications of this case have resonated deeply within the community and beyond, inspiring Genevieve’s parents, Katie Wheeler and John Meehan, to initiate a campaign aimed at promoting essential safety enhancements in early years education settings.

The campaign is calling for several critical measures, including the installation of compulsory CCTV in all nurseries and regular unannounced inspections by Ofsted. It advocates for a mandatory clear guidance protocol on safe sleep practices for children and comprehensive training for nursery staff—elements that the parents believe could prevent future tragedies. The heartfelt plea from Wheeler, who described her daughter as “mischievous, loving and full of wonder,” highlights the devastating reality faced by many parents who entrust their children to care providers. Their calls have triggered a discussion about the reliance on existing regulatory frameworks, with parents like Wheeler emphasising that they expect safety assurances based on Ofsted inspection reports and fellow parents' reviews.

The case and subsequent advocacy efforts have not only spotlighted procedural inadequacies but have also invited scrutiny of the overall atmosphere within childcare settings. Current ratios of staff to children and the adequacy of training regarding safe sleeping practices are now under examination. Several child safety experts have echoed Genevieve’s parents' sentiments, suggesting that improvements in staff training and monitoring are crucial for preventing future incidents. The emphasis has shifted to not just accountability but also the systemic changes needed to protect vulnerable children in care.

As the campaign grows, parents across the country are rallying to support legislation ensuring that nursery environments meet rigorous safety standards. The tragic loss of young lives like Genevieve's has historically led to reform, and this instance may serve as a crucial catalyst for change in nursery regulations. The ongoing discourse reflects a collective desire to create safer, more secure environments for children where families can relinquish their fears and trust in the caregivers overseeing their little ones.

Reflecting on this profound loss, Wheeler stated, “Her death was entirely preventable.” This sentiment encapsulates the drive many parents now feel to ensure that safety is at the forefront of childcare practices, advocating for a robust framework that guarantees their children receive not only care but also a secure and nurturing environment.

In the aftermath of this tragedy, it becomes painfully evident that the issues highlighted extend beyond one individual’s actions; they speak to a broader need for enhanced regulations and conscience-driven practices within the early years sector, ensuring that no parent has to experience the heartbreak that has befallen Genevieve's family.

### Reference Map

* Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2056844/parents-baby-girl-killed), [[2]](https://www.itv.com/news/granada/2024-05-20/nursery-nurse-killed-baby-after-strapping-her-face-down), [[5]](https://news.sky.com/story/genevieve-meehan-death-nursery-worker-who-strapped-baby-face-down-to-bean-bag-and-left-her-to-die-jailed-for-14-years-13140742)
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* Paragraph 3: [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2056844/parents-baby-girl-killed), [[6]](https://news.sky.com/story/genevieve-meehan-parents-will-never-forgive-nursery-worker-who-killed-baby-girl-13140307), [[4]](https://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/content/news/stockport-nursery-deputy-manager-guilty-of-manslaughter-is-sentenced-to-14-years-in-prison/)
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* Paragraph 7: [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2056844/parents-baby-girl-killed), [[6]](https://news.sky.com/story/genevieve-meehan-parents-will-never-forgive-nursery-worker-who-killed-baby-girl-13140307)

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1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2056844/parents-baby-girl-killed> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
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6. <https://news.sky.com/story/genevieve-meehan-parents-will-never-forgive-nursery-worker-who-killed-baby-girl-13140307> - The parents of nine-month-old Genevieve Meehan, who died at Tiny Toes Nursery in Cheadle Hulme, Stockport, have expressed their grief and anger following the conviction of nursery worker Kate Roughley for manslaughter. The parents described their daughter as a joyful and mischievous child and stated they will 'never forgive' the nursery worker for her actions. ([news.sky.com](https://news.sky.com/story/genevieve-meehan-parents-will-never-forgive-nursery-worker-who-killed-baby-girl-13140307?utm_source=openai))
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