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Federal Way woman pleads guilty in foster-child abuse

By Christine Clarridge
Seattle Times staff reporter

A woman who burned her foster daughter's tongue with a heated fork, beat her feet with dumbbells and stuck a needle into the girl's eye several times pleaded guilty Monday to three counts of assault. Chornice Y. Kabbelliyaa, who also goes by the last name of Lewis, pleaded guilty in King County Superior Court to one count of first-degree assault and two counts of second-degree assault for her treatment of her foster daughter, who is also her cousin.

Kabbelliyaa, 34, of Federal Way, had been the girl's licensed foster mother since the girl was 5 years old.

The woman was arrested last year after Child Protective Services was called by a neighbor who reported seeing Kabbelliyaa punch the girl, hit her with an umbrella and lock her in an outside storage unit for hours.

Physicians examining the girl found serious damage to the girl's right eye, scarring, bruising and a severely burned tongue.

The girl, who was then 14, told police and CPS investigators that her foster mother had become angry on one occasion and plunged an insulin needle into the pupil of her right eye, holding it in her eye for several minutes and telling the girl not to move or she'd be blinded.

A medical examination showed similar puncture wounds to the pupil of the girl's left eye.

In addition, police and prosecutors said in charging papers, Kabbelliyaa beat the girl with crutches, an umbrella, canned goods and keys.

Charging documents also state that Kabbelliyaa would turn on the stove's burner until it was red-hot before pressing the girl's palm onto the burner.

Kabbelliyaa, who is scheduled to be sentenced on Nov. 16 at the Regional Justice Center in Kent, will face a standard sentencing range of 10 years to a little more than 14 years. Prosecutors said they will seek a top-end sentence.

Christine Clarridge: 206-464-8983 or cclarridge@seattletimes.com

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