



MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
OFFICE OF CHILDHOOD - CHILD CARE COMPLIANCE

COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION OF
SUBSTANTIATED STATUTE OR RULE VIOLATIONS

DATE OF REPORT
10/2/2023

DVN
002810800

FACILITY NAME

ALICIA WATKINS LLC

FACILITY ADDRESS

1010 FAY ST

CITY

COLUMBIA

ZIP CODE

65201-4716

PHONE NUMBER

(573) 554-5523

COUNTY

BOONE

ASSIGNED SPECIALIST

HUDSON, ELIZABETH

RULE/STATUTE VIOLATION(S)

VIOLATION(S)

5 CSR 25-500.102(1)(A)

Child care personnel shall be of good character and intent and shall be qualified to provide care conducive to the welfare of children.

5 CSR 25-500.102(1)(O)

Child care staff members with disqualifying background screenings results as defined in 5 CSR 25-600.040 Background Screening Findings, shall be prohibited from being present on the premises of the facility.

5 CSR 25-500.102(2)(A)1.

An approved certificated group child care home provider or center director shall be responsible for planning, monitoring, and managing the facility's daily program.

5 CSR 25-500.102(2)(A)2.

Center directors and group child care home providers routinely shall be on duty during the hours of highest attendance a minimum of forty (40) hours per week. If the facility operates less than forty (40) hours per week, the center director or group child care home provider shall be on duty at least fifty percent (50%) of the operating hours.

CONCLUSION SUMMARY

On October 02, 2023, the Office of Childhood (OOC) received an allegation that Mia resigned as director on 9/29/23. She was told by the owner, Alicia, that it was fine for Mia to only work 20 hours a week and the facility inspector was aware. Mia has only been working Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9:00 am to noon. Alicia told Mia she got her director certification for 60 kids and she is the director now. Alicia also has been working in the office of the facility since they opened and she currently has an ineligible letter dated February 9, 2023. After conducting an investigation, Compliance Inspector (CI) Liz Hudson has found this allegation to be substantiated based on the following evidence:

5 CSR 25-500.102(1)(A)., which states: "Child care personnel shall be of good character and intent and shall be qualified to provide care conducive to the welfare of children."

AND

5 CSR 25-500.102(1)(O)., which states: "Child care staff members with disqualifying background screenings results as defined in 5 CSR 25-600.040 Background Screening Findings, shall be prohibited from being present on the premises of the facility."

AND

5 CSR 25-500.102(2)(A)1., which states: "An approved certificated group child care home provider or center director shall be responsible for planning, monitoring, and managing the facility's daily program."

AND

5 CSR 25-500.102(2)(A)2. "Center directors and group child care home providers routinely shall be on duty during the hours of highest attendance a minimum of forty (40) hours per week. If the facility operates less than forty (40) hours per week, the center director or group child care home provider shall be on duty at least fifty percent (50%) of the operating hours."

On October 05, 2023, CI Hudson conducted an unannounced inspection at Alicia Watkins LLC (A Circle of Love). CI Hudson interviewed Teacher Erica Hughes who was in charge when CI Hudson arrived. Ms. Erica stated that Ms. Alicia Watkins would be there at 2:00pm and that Ms. Alicia is there on a daily basis and that she is now the acting director. CI Hudson was later met at the facility by Co-owner Shepel Davis, Ms. Alicia's husband, who conferenced in Alicia Watkins via phone. Both Ms. Alicia and Mr. Shepel stated that Mia Bethany, their director, was working three times a week at the facility because she was hired

part-time for another job. Ms. Alicia and Mr. Shepel both stated that they did not tell Mia she could do that but that she went out on her own, got the job so they really didn't have a choice. Both staff stated that she was working this schedule, part-time for approximately a month. Ms. Mia's last day of employment was on Friday, September 30, 2023. Ms. Alicia stated that she was filling in as director until someone else was hired. CI Hudson asked for a copy of Alicia's eligibility letter and she stated that she had one but it was not at the facility. She did not have a copy of her approved director certification at the facility which she claimed to have recently received either. Alicia stated that these documents were in her car or at her home. Ms. Alicia and Mr. Shepel were informed that CI Hudson was aware that there was an ineligible letter issued from the Office of Childhood for Alicia Watkins dated February 09, 2023 and therefore she could not be part owner of the daycare, working at the daycare in any capacity or present in the building when children are present. Mr. Shepel stated that Alicia just works in the office and not around the children and that they have an attorney (Robin Winn) working on this right now and that Ms. Alicia should be cleared very soon with a good cause waiver. Ms. Alicia stated that she was not aware that she could not be at the facility.

On October 05, 2023, CI Liz Hudson conducted a walkthrough of the facility. Alicia Watkins was not on the premise and caregiver Erica Hughes was in charge since the facility has no current approved director. There was no eligible or ineligible letter on file for Alicia Watkins or an approved director certification or director approval on file for Alicia Watkins at the facility.

On November 1, 2023, CI Hudson conducted an interview via phone with Mia Bethany, former employee at Alicia Watkins LLC (A Circle Of Love). Ms. Mia stated that she was hired in May 2023, when the facility first opened, for the position of director. She was hired as director to work part-time and she had wanted a full-time position but Ms. Alicia and Mr. Shepel were not able to pay her for full-time employment. She said that she stayed on the job with the agreement that eventually she would be given a full time schedule. Ms. Mia stated that Ms. Alicia filled in for her on the days/hours that she was not working. Ms. Mia stated that up until she quit her position on September 29, 2023, the couple would not give her any more hours. Ms. Mia stated that Ms. Alicia and Mr. Shepel worked with and around the children enrolled. In addition, Ms. Alicia picked up and transported the school aged children. Ms. Mia stated that she had questioned Ms. Alicia regarding not having a full time director and how she was able to do this under licensing rules. She stated that Ms. Alicia and Mr. Shepel both told her that their licensing worker had approved this.

Ms. Mia stated that she never observed the Certificate for Director that Ms. Alicia claimed to have. Ms. Mia also stated that she had no idea that Ms. Alicia had an ineligibility letter and was not supposed to be on the premises. CI was able to confirm with Ms. Mia that there has never been a full-time director at the facility by choice of Ms. Alicia and Mr. Shepel.

CI Hudson confirmed that there is no approved director working at the facility at this time and there has never been an approved director working at the facility 40 hours a week since they opened. Ms. Alicia and Mr. Shepel gave inconsistent statements and both stated initially that Ms. Alicia had an eligibility letter but later in the interviews, both admitted that she did not and that they were working on getting a good cause waiver with their attorney. All staff interviewed stated that Alicia Watkins was at the facility daily.

CORRECTIVE MEASURES

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The facility shall notify all staff members of the violations which were substantiated, and specify the actions to be taken by all staff in order to comply with all violations cited. A copy of the memo, letter, or staff meeting agenda shall be submitted to the Office of Childhood.

COMPLETED (Y/N)

Yes

COMPLETED DATE

3/20/2024

DISPOSITION

SUBSTANTIATED

DISPOSITION DATE

11/3/2023

APPROVING SUPERVISOR

CHRISCO, MARLA L