



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

COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION OF
SUBSTANTIATED STATUTE OR RULE VIOLATIONS

DATE OF REPORT
8/25/2021

DVN
002666584

FACILITY NAME

SMART BEGINNINGS EARLY LEARNING CENTER

FACILITY ADDRESS

7400 NW RIVER PARK DR

CITY

PARKVILLE

ZIP CODE

64152-5028

PHONE NUMBER

(816) 587-1980

COUNTY

PLATTE

ASSIGNED SPECIALIST

TRUSSELL, MICHELLE RENEE

RULE/STATUTE VIOLATION(S)

VIOLATION(S)

5 CSR 25-500.182(1)(C)3.

Only constructive, age-appropriate methods of discipline shall be used to help children develop self-control and assume responsibility for their own actions.

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)(J)

All staff shall acquaint themselves with the child abuse and neglect law and shall make a report of any suspected child abuse or neglect to the Children's Division at the toll-free number 1-800-392-3738 or online at <https://apps.dss.mo.gov/OnlineCanReporting/default.aspx>.

CONCLUSION SUMMARY

The Office of Childhood determined the allegations of this complaint to be substantiated. The determination is based on documentation reviewed through the course of the investigation, observations made by Compliance Inspector (CI) Michelle Trussell and interviews conducted with the director Brandy Staples, Elizabeth Lundgren, Katie Buster, Theresa Reinke and Parent A.

CI Trussell conducted an investigation regarding the allegation that on August 11, 2021, Child A, sustained scratches on her arm while in care at the facility.

On August 25, 2021 CI Trussell conducted interviews with Brandy Staples, Elizabeth Lundgren, Katie Buster and Parent A. An interview was attempted with Child A but she was non-verbal. An additional interview was conducted on August 30, 2021 with Theresa Reinke. CI Trussell attempted to contact Taquetta Strickland via phone to conduct an interview but attempts were unsuccessful.

After conducting the investigation, it was determined through interviews with staff members and Parent A, Child A, 2 years old, was not provided with age-appropriate discipline while in care at the facility on August 11, 2021. It is also determined through interviews with staff members and Parent A, Taquetta Strickland told fellow staff members different accounts of the incident. Furthermore, it was determined through interviews the facility did not report the incident to the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline. This conclusion is based on the following evidence of licensing rule violations which occurred at the facility:

5 CSR 25-500.182(1)(C)3

Only constructive, age-appropriate methods of discipline shall be used to help children develop self-control and assume responsibility for their own actions.

AND

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.

According to information obtained in these interviews, on August 11, 2021 and August 12, 2021 Ms. Strickland provided different accounts as to the incident that occurred with Child A. Ms. Strickland stated to Parent A, Elizabeth Lundgren and Theresa Reinke that Child A was trying to 'go after' and/or grab another child in the classroom so she grabbed Child A to prevent her from hurting another child. Ms. Strickland stated to Brandy Staples Child A was going to bite another child and she grabbed Child A to prevent her from hurting another child. Ms. Strickland stated to Katie Buster Child A was going to pinch another child's face and she grabbed Child A to prevent her from hurting another child.

CI Trussell observed an Accident/Injury Report completed by Ms. Strickland on the incident which indicates Child A was "digging in one of her friends face". This report was signed by Ms. Strickland on August 11, 2021.

According to information obtained in an interview with Brandy Staples and Theresa Reinke, on August 13, 2021 Ms. Strickland stated to Ms. Staples and Ms. Reinke she lied about the incident and said she grabbed Child A by the arms out of frustration while working in the classroom. CI Trussell observed an Incident Report completed by Ms. Strickland and signed on August 13, 2021 stating she grabbed Child A by the arms because of her frustration and scratched Child A. Ms. Staples stated the facility terminated Ms. Strickland from employment immediately on August 13, 2021.

5 CSR 25-500. 102(1)(J)

All staff shall acquaint themselves with the child abuse and neglect law and shall make a report of any suspected child abuse or neglect to the Children's Division at the toll-free number 1-800-392-3738 or online at

<https://apps.dss.mo.gov/OnlineCanReporting/default.aspx>

According to information obtained in interviews with Brandy Staples, Elizabeth Lundgren, Katie Buster and Theresa Reinke the incident of Ms. Strickland grabbing Child A by the arms and leaving scratches was not reported to the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline at any time.

CORRECTIVE MEASURES

CORRECTIVE MEASURE	COMPLETED (Y/N)	COMPLETED DATE
All staff and volunteers of Smart Beginnings must obtain one (1) clock hour of training approved by the Office of Childhood, on age appropriate discipline. The training must be held by an approved and qualified source, outside of the Smart Beginnings network. Training may be obtained from the Missouri Workshop Calendar. The training calendar can be found at http://www.moworkshopcalendar.org/ . Verification of training completion shall be from the Open Initiative Toolbox report.	Yes	9/8/2022
CORRECTIVE MEASURE	COMPLETED (Y/N)	COMPLETED DATE
All staff and volunteers of Smart Beginnings must obtain training approved by the Office of Childhood on Child Abuse and Neglect. The training must be held by approved and qualified source, outside of the Smart Beginnings network. Training may be obtained from the Missouri Workshop Calendar. The training calendar can be found at http://www.moworkshopcalendar.org/ . Verification of training completion shall be from the Open Initiative Toolbox report.	Yes	9/28/2021
DISPOSITION	DISPOSITION DATE	
SUBSTANTIATED	2/4/2022	
APPROVING SUPERVISOR		
NURNBERG, TONY A		