



MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
OFFICE OF CHILDHOOD - CHILD CARE COMPLIANCE
COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION OF
SUBSTANTIATED STATUTE OR RULE VIOLATIONS

DATE OF REPORT
2/22/2021

DVN
002650180

FACILITY NAME

LITTLE SUNSHINE'S PLAYHOUSE & PRESCHOOL

FACILITY ADDRESS

8351 DELCREST DR

CITY

ST LOUIS

ZIP CODE

63124-2102

PHONE NUMBER

(314) 995-7204

COUNTY

ST LOUIS

ASSIGNED SPECIALIST

WILMESHER, LAURA

RULE/STATUTE VIOLATION(S)

VIOLATION(S)

19 CSR 30-62.182 (1)(C)(6)

Firm, positive statements or redirection of behavior shall be used with infants and toddlers.

19 CSR 30-62.182 (1)(C)(7)

Physical punishment including, but not limited to, spanking, slapping, shaking, biting or pulling hair shall be prohibited.

19 CSR 30-62.182 (1)(C)(8)

No discipline technique which is humiliating, threatening or frightening to children shall be used. Children shall not be shamed, ridiculed or spoken to harshly, abusively or with profanity.

19 CSR 30-62.182 (2)(C)(4)(H)

Toddlers shall be taken out of bed for other activities when they awaken.

RSMo 210.115.1

Reports of abuse, neglect, and under age eighteen deaths - persons required to report - supervisors and administrators not to impede reporting - deaths required to be reported to the division or child fatality review panel, when - report made to another state, when. - When any physician, medical examiner, coroner, dentist, chiropractor, optometrist, podiatrist, resident, intern, nurse, hospital or clinic personnel that are engaged in the examination, care, treatment or research of persons, and any other health practitioner, psychologist, mental health professional, social worker, day care center worker or other child-care worker, juvenile officer, probation or parole officer, jail or detention center personnel, teacher, principal or other school official, minister as provided by section 352.400, peace officer or law enforcement official, volunteer or personnel of a community service program that offers support services for families in crisis to assist in the delegation of any powers regarding the care and custody of a child by a properly executed power of attorney pursuant to sections 475.600 to 475.604, or other person with responsibility for the care of children has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been or may be subjected to abuse or neglect or observes a child being subjected to conditions or circumstances which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect, that person shall immediately report to the division in accordance with the provisions of sections 210.109 to 210.183. No internal investigation shall be initiated until such a report has been made. As used in this section, the term "abuse" is not limited to abuse inflicted by a person responsible for the child's care, custody and control as specified in section 210.110, but shall also include abuse inflicted by any other person.

CONCLUSION SUMMARY

Child Care Facility Specialist (CCFS) Laura Wilmesher conducted an investigation regarding the allegation that an unknown caregiver was being abusive towards unknown children at the facility. After conducting the investigation, CCFS Wilmesher finds this allegation is substantiated. This conclusion is based on the following evidence of licensing rule violations which occurred at the facility:

19 CSR 30-62.182 (1)(C)(6) which states: "Firm, positive statements or redirection of behavior shall be used with infants and toddlers."

AND

19 CSR 30-62.182 (1)(C)(7) which states: "Physical punishment including, but not limited to, spanking, slapping, shaking, biting or pulling hair shall be prohibited."

AND

19 CSR 30-62.182 (1)(C)(8) which states: "No discipline technique which is humiliating, threatening or frightening to children shall be used. Children shall not be shamed, ridiculed or spoken to harshly, abusively or with profanity."

On February 26, 2021, CCFS Wilmesher conducted an interview with director, Mary Moore, who stated caregiver Abigail Jackson told her that former caregiver, Jennifer Joachims, was speaking harshly to the children.

CCFS Wilmesher also conducted interviews with caregivers Abigail Jackson, Laru Calton, and Tatianna Benford on February 26, 2021. Abigail Jackson stated Jennifer Joachims was always yelling and harsh with the children and that the children seemed scared of Jennifer. Abigail Jackson stated Jennifer Joachims had grabbed Child A [age one year] by the face, telling her to look at her. Laru Calton stated when Child C [age one year] woke up at 2:30 PM, Jennifer Joachims grabbed him and slammed him on the cot and said, "You better effin' stay there." Laru Calton also said that Jennifer Joachims would yell at the children. Tatianna Benford stated the first time she worked with Jennifer Joachims, she noticed that Jennifer was more aggressive with the children, and that she would grab the children and pull on their arms. Tatianna Benford stated if Jennifer Joachims didn't like the way the children were laying on their cots, she would push their heads down on the cots, and that Child B, Child C, and Child D [all age one year] are children she would do that to. Tatianna Benford stated Jennifer Joachims pulled Child D by the arm, he dropped to the floor, and then Jennifer dragged him. Tatianna Benford also stated Jennifer Joachims' tone was very aggressive with the children, and that if Jennifer wanted a child to sit at the table and do puzzles, for example, and the child wanted to get up from the table, she would push the child back down roughly in the chair. Tatianna Benford stated that Jennifer Joachims did this to Child D and that he screamed and cried when she did this, and that Jennifer would scoot Child D up against the table hard when he didn't want to stay in the chair.

On March 5, 2021, CCFS Wilmesher conducted a follow-up interview with director Mary Moore who stated that Amanda Crawford told her that Laru Calton had similar feelings about Jennifer Joachims as Abigail Jackson and Tatianna had expressed to her, that Jennifer was harsh with her tone to the children.

CCFS Wilmesher also conducted follow-up interviews with caregivers Tatianna Benford, Amanda Crawford, and Laru Calton on March 5, 2021. Tatianna Benford and Laru Calton remained consistent in their statements regarding their witnessing of Jennifer's rough contact with one-year-old children at the facility, as well as using a harsh tone/yelling at the children. Amanda Crawford stated that instead of redirecting the one year old children, Jennifer Joachims would yell at them.

On March 5, 2021, CCFS Wilmesher also conducted an interview with head teacher, Rebecca Horn, who stated Jennifer Joachims would have days where she would get frustrated, and she would use a tone that wasn't appropriate and that she would have a very harsh tone, demanding and barking orders at children. Rebecca Horn stated Laru Calton had also told her that she felt Jennifer Joachims used too much force to put Child C down on his cot.

According to Abby Davis, the cameras in the facility are live feed only and does not store, therefore no video footage was available for CCFS Wilmesher review.

CCFS Wilmesher attempted to contact Jennifer Joachims, but the attempt was unsuccessful.

19 CSR 30-62.182 (2)(C)(4)(H) which states: "Toddlers shall be taken out of bed for other activities when they awaken."

During an interview on February 26, 2021, and again during a follow-up interview on March 5, 2021, caregiver Laru Calton stated that on an unknown date, Child C [age one year] work up at 2:30 PM, and the children have to stay on their cots until 3:00 PM, so Jennifer Joachims grabbed Child C and slammed him on the cot and told him, "You better effin stay there."

RSMo 210.115.1 which states: "Reports of abuse, neglect, and under age eighteen deaths - persons required to report - supervisors and administrators not to impede reporting - deaths required to be reported to the division or child fatality review panel, when - report made to another state, when. - When any physician, medical examiner, coroner, dentist, chiropractor, optometrist, podiatrist, resident, intern, nurse, hospital or clinic personnel that are engaged in the examination, care, treatment or research of persons, and any other health practitioner, psychologist, mental health professional, social worker, day care center worker or other child-care worker, juvenile officer, probation or parole officer, jail or detention center personnel, teacher, principal or other school official, minister as provided by section 352.400, peace officer or law enforcement official, volunteer or personnel of a community service program that offers support services for families in crisis to assist in the delegation of any powers regarding the care and custody of a child by a properly executed power of attorney pursuant to sections 475.600 to 475.604, or other person with responsibility for the care of children has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been or may be subjected to abuse or neglect or observes a child being subjected to conditions or circumstances which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect, that person shall immediately report to the division in accordance with the provisions of sections 210.109 to 210.183. No internal investigation shall be initiated until such a report has been made. As used in this section, the term "abuse" is not limited to abuse inflicted by a person responsible for the child's care, custody and control as specified in section 210.110, but shall also include abuse inflicted by any other person."

On February 26, 2021, and March 5, 2021, CCFS Wilmesher conducted interviews with caregivers Laru Calton, Tatianna Benford, and Abigail Jackson, who all stated that they had witnessed former caregiver Jennifer Joachims handling children roughly, as described above in this conclusion summary, and also all stated that no contact was made to the hotline to report the suspected abuse. In addition, all three caregivers as well as caregiver Amanda Crawford stated that they spoke with director Mary Moore regarding Jennifer Joachims handling the one-year-old children roughly, however, Mary Moore denied being aware of the concerns of physical roughness and did not make a report to the hotline. Caregiver Tatianna Benford also stated that she informed assistant director, Daniel Plump, of the concerns regarding Jennifer Joachims handling the children roughly, but Daniel Plump denied being informed about anything other than Jennifer's tone with the children and did not make a report to the hotline.

On February 26, 2021, CCFS Wilmesher received an employee statement signed by caregiver Abigail Jackson on February 22, 2021, which included the following statement: "I trust LSP, and will bring any concerns regarding employee misconduct including, but not limited to, child abuse to LSP leadership team immediately so that my concerns can be promptly addressed to ensure the safety of all LSP students and staff." CCFS Wilmesher discussed with director, Mary Moore, that this does not fulfill the caregiver's responsibility as a mandated reporter of child abuse/neglect.

CORRECTIVE MEASURES

CORRECTIVE MEASURE	COMPLETED (Y/N)	COMPLETED DATE
The facility shall have all staff members (paid employees and paid/unpaid volunteers) obtain one (1) clock hour of approved training on appropriate discipline, outside the Little Sunshine's Playhouse & Preschool network. Training may be obtained from the Missouri Workshop Calendar. The training calendar can be found at http://www.moworkshopcalendar.org/ . The local Child Care Aware agency may also assist in finding training. The Child Care Aware website can be found at http://www.childcareaware.org/ . Verification of training completion shall be from the Open Initiative Toolbox report.	Yes	5/31/2021

CORRECTIVE MEASURE	COMPLETED (Y/N)	COMPLETED DATE
All staff members (paid employees or unpaid volunteers) must take the 1.0 clock hour DHSS online training course titled, "Making a Difference: Protecting Health and Keeping Children Safe" available at https://health.mo.gov/safety/childcare/onlinetraining.php . Verification of attendance shall be through the Toolbox report.	Yes	5/31/2021

CORRECTIVE MEASURE	COMPLETED (Y/N)	COMPLETED DATE
The facility shall have all staff members (paid employees and paid/unpaid volunteers) obtain one (1) clock hour of approved training on mandated reporting, outside the Little Sunshine's Playhouse & Preschool network. Training may be obtained from the Missouri Workshop Calendar. The training calendar can be found at http://www.moworkshopcalendar.org/ . The local Child Care Aware agency may also assist in finding training. The Child Care Aware website can be found at http://www.childcareaware.org/ . Verification of training completion shall be from the Open Initiative Toolbox report.	Yes	5/31/2021

CORRECTIVE MEASURE	COMPLETED (Y/N)	COMPLETED DATE
The facility shall conduct a staff meeting to review the center's policies and all licensing rules and regulations regarding 19 CSR 30-62.182 Child Care Program. The facility must provide the Section for Child Care Regulation with a statement, signed by all staff members (paid employees and paid/unpaid volunteers), to indicate they understand and agree to follow those rules and regulations.	Yes	5/31/2021

DISPOSITION	DISPOSITION DATE
SUBSTANTIATED	4/23/2021

APPROVING SUPERVISOR
CLARK, ANGELA