



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

COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION OF
SUBSTANTIATED STATUTE OR RULE VIOLATIONS

DATE OF REPORT
2/25/2025

DVN
002597051

FACILITY NAME

HERE WE GROW EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

FACILITY ADDRESS

12 E LOCKWOOD AVE

CITY

WEBSTER GROVES

ZIP CODE

63119-3020

PHONE NUMBER

(314) 222-3457

COUNTY

ST LOUIS

ASSIGNED SPECIALIST

HUGHES, CHRISTINE D

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.

CONCLUSION SUMMARY

Compliance Inspector (CI) Christy Hughes conducted an investigation of the allegation that Child A (6-years-old) stated that teacher Christopher Titus pulled her pants down and put his private part on her private parts. The allegation is substantiated based on the following information.

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."

On March 4, 2025, Child A (6-years-old) provided clear descriptions of actions that were inappropriate from Christopher Titus.

On March 6, 2025, director Lindsay Jones stated that Christopher "Chris" Titus was hired at the facility in January 2018. Chris was accused of touching a child's vagina in 2019 but there was no evidence to substantiate the allegation. After that 2019 allegation, Chris was not allowed to work in classrooms without another staff member being present or allowed to work with the child in question at all. But then, approximately three years ago, Chris became the opener and was at the facility in the mornings by himself. Chris was alone with three to five children every morning and would be in the classrooms to give teachers breaks during naptime. She had not received any concerns or allegations from any parents or children regarding Chris since 2019. However, more than one staff had complained that Chris stood too close while speaking to them and the staff did not like that.

On March 6, 2025, child care staff member Jodie Nagel stated that Chris was usually alone with four children when she arrived. Chris did not assist any of the preschoolers in the bathroom. She had not had any concerns regarding Chris prior to his arrest.

On March 6, 2025, child care staff member Scarlet Kistner stated that Chris did assist with taking children to the bathroom, usually four to five children at a time. Last week, she observed Chris in the girls' restroom with Child B (2-years-old). [Scarlet described actions of Chris and Child B that were similar inappropriate actions described by Child A.] Child B appeared upset but was not crying. She thought that it was unusual for Chris to be assisting Child B as Child B did not require any assistance in the bathroom. Child B had been emotional at drop-off recently, particularly when Chris was present. She told another staff Amanda House about her concern a few days later and then never told Lindsey about the concern until Chris was arrested.

On March 18, 2025, Parent B (parent of Child B) stated that she had been contacted by a staff member with concerns after Chris had been arrested. The staff member told her that Chris always wanted to take Child B to the bathroom.

On March 20, 2025, Parent D (parent of Child D and Child E) stated that Child E told her about three years ago that Chris rubbed her back at naptime and told her that her cot needed to be placed in a spot where the cameras could not see.

On March 20, 2025, Child E (7-years-old) provided clear descriptions of actions that were inappropriate from Christopher Titus.

On March 21, 2025, director Lindsay Jones was re-interviewed and stated that after that 2019 allegation, approximately 30 days after she received the unsubstantiated report, Chris was put back into the classroom, alone, giving breaks to teachers during nap time. Chris then began opening the building, alone, in February 2022 as Chris was the most reliable staff she had. Chris was alone in the building from 6:30 to 7:00 a.m. every morning. There were usually five children in Chris's care in the mornings. Chris was also alone with children during nap time when giving breaks. Chris is her brother-in-law and she only saw Chris outside of work about two or three times in the last 11 years. She never suspected Chris of touching any children inappropriately. Scarlet came to her the day Chris was arrested with concerns about Chris in the bathroom with Child B. Some staff had come to her and stated that Chris stood too close while speaking to them and the staff did not like that but no staff ever told her they saw Chris touch any children inappropriately.

On March 21, 2025, child care staff member Brandon Jones stated that he never had any concerns with Chris inside the center or outside of the center. Chris is his brother-in-law and he sees Chris at birthdays, Christmas, and Easter. He did have some concerns with Chris about lying and getting in people's personal space by close talking. Chris was accused of inappropriately touching a child years ago and that family left Here We Grow soon after. Before being arrested, Chris was in the Two-year-old's Class, daily, by himself; Chris gave staff breaks in the Fox Class, which included four- and five-year-old children; and Christ assisted children in the bathrooms. He never saw Chris doing anything inappropriate to children.

On March 21, 2025, child care staff member Scarlet Kistner was re-interviewed and stated that she did have concerns with how Chris interacted with Child B. Child B was potty trained but Chris insisted on taking Child B to the bathroom every time. There were times that Child B did not want to go with Chris to the bathroom. Chris was adamant about taking all the girls to the bathroom but did not pay much attention to the boys. She went on vacation for two weeks in the beginning of February 2025, but when she returned, she noticed a big change in Child B. Child B would be crying at drop-off and it took a while for her to settle down. Child B started having a lot of potty accidents. Chris told her that he felt Child B was just being dramatic. There was a day recently that the children were outside, and Child B needed to go to the bathroom. Chris took Child B to the bathroom. [Scarlet re-described the incident of inappropriate actions between Chris and Child B.] That incident had been on her mind for a while and her gut was telling her it was wrong. She told another teacher, Amanda House about the situation but did not tell anyone else. She told Lindsay about that incident the day Chris was arrested. She did also have concerns about Child J crying throughout her diaper changes, both with herself and when Chris changed her, but she never told anyone about her concerns.

On March 21, 2025, child care staff member Jodie Nagel was re-interviewed and stated that she had been employed for two years, left for five years, and returned in May 2024. She was surprised when she returned after five years that Chris was still employed with the center because she did not feel that Chris was a good preschool teacher. Chris did not use correct verbiage when speaking with the children. She felt Chris was awkward, paced a lot, and was a close talker. She thinks Chris only still worked at Here We Grow because he was related to Lindsay and Brandon. When she arrived daily at 7:30 a.m., Chris was in the Busy Bee's Class (young two-year-olds), by himself. Chris was insistent every day that he be the one to take Child B to the bathroom. She had concerns in the last few weeks because Child B was suddenly having rough drop offs. On the Friday before Chris was arrested, Child B would not go to Chris without crying.

On March 24, 2025, former child care staff member Amanda House stated that the only thing that she felt was a red flag with Chris was that Chris only took the girls to the bathroom. Scarlet told her about her concerns with Child B's change in behavior and described what she saw Chris doing with Child B in the bathroom. However, she never told anyone about her concerns or Scarlet's concern.

On March 28, 2025, Parent K (parent of Child K) stated that Child K attended the facility for two and a half years. She dropped Child K off to Chris each morning. She recalled one time that she dropped Child K off to Chris while she was pregnant with her second child and Chris asked her when her child was due. After she answered him, he commented to her, "Wow, June must have been a busy month for you and your husband." Chris had also made a comment about how many December birthday's there were and that the parents all must have been really busy the month of conception. Chris' words gave her a bad gut feeling so she did not leave Child K with Chris until another staff member arrived. She spoke to Maddie Dunlap, who was the previous assistant director, that evening when she picked up Child K about how uncomfortable she was leaving Child K with Chris in the mornings. They brought someone in with Chris for a little while but then Chris went back to being by himself in the mornings. After she was made aware of the current, serious allegations towards Chris, she no longer feels the center was looking out for the children and she disenrolled her children.

On March 31, 2025, director Lindsay Jones was re-interviewed and stated that she was made aware by her previous assistant director, Maddie Dunlap, of a concern from Parent K about Chris. It was about a year and a half ago. Chris had made a comment to Parent K about when Parent K's baby was due. Chris counted back to when the baby would have been conceived and told Parent K she must have been busy. Chris also made a comment about how many children they have with birthdays in September, and Chris knew exactly what those parents were all doing in January. She had a talk with Chris about how to speak appropriately to parents.

She came in and opened with Chris for a couple of weeks and then went back to leaving Chris alone to open again but she was not concerned with this behavior.

CORRECTIVE MEASURES

CORRECTIVE MEASURE	COMPLETED (Y/N)	COMPLETED DATE
	No	

DISPOSITION	DISPOSITION DATE
SUBSTANTIATED	4/3/2025

APPROVING SUPERVISOR
CHRISCO, MARLA L