



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

COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION OF
SUBSTANTIATED STATUTE OR RULE VIOLATIONS

DATE OF REPORT
5/17/2023

DVN
002292657

FACILITY NAME

BRIGHTON LEARNING CENTER INC

FACILITY ADDRESS

7227 N EUCLID AVE

CITY

GLADSTONE

ZIP CODE

64118-2368

PHONE NUMBER

(816) 436-2290

COUNTY

CLAY

ASSIGNED SPECIALIST

IBBOTSON, JESSICA

RULE/STATUTE VIOLATION(S)

VIOLATION(S)

5 CSR 25-500.182(1)(A)1.

Caregivers shall not leave any child without competent adult supervision.

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

Caregivers shall provide frequent, direct contact so children are not left unobserved on the premises.

CONCLUSION SUMMARY

Compliance Inspector (CI) Jessica Ibbotson conducted an investigation regarding the allegation that Child A had escaped from the playground and was found across the parking lot by a bus aide. After conducting the investigation, CI Ibbotson finds this allegation is substantiated. This conclusion is based on the following evidence of licensing rule violations which occurred at the facility:

5 CSR 25-500.182(1)(A)1. which states: "Caregivers shall not leave any child without competent adult supervision."

AND

5 CSR 25-500.182(1)(A)3. which states: "Caregivers shall provide frequent, direct contact so children are not left unobserved on the premises."

On May 18, 2023, CI Ibbotson interviewed Director Lisa Sheffield, Caregiver Elise Thomas, Caregiver Brooklyn Warnes and Caregiver Zena Brady. Director Sheffield stated that Caregiver Thomas was responsible for Child A on May 17, 2023, while playing outside on the toddler playground. Director Sheffield stated that Bus Aide Malotte approached the front door of the facility while carrying Child A and informed that her that she found Child A alone in the empty parking lot next door to the facility. Director Sheffield stated that as she was returning Child A to his classroom, Caregiver Thomas met her in the hallway, actively searching for Child A. Director Sheffield stated that she was unsure how long Child A had been missing for and did not know how Child A had escaped from the playground but thought it could be related to parents using the gates and not properly shutting them completely. Director Sheffield stated she then contacted the Office of Childhood (OOC) and Parent A immediately after the incident. Director Sheffield stated that a mandatory meeting with all toddler teachers was scheduled for May 18, 2023, but it was unknown what disciplinary action would be taken against Caregiver Thomas.

Caregiver Thomas stated that she was outside on the toddler playground with four children when she realized that Child A was missing. Caregiver Thomas stated she was unsure how Child A had escaped but recalled the front entrance gate that exited to the parking lot to be closed. Caregiver Thomas also stated that children were not observed near the front entrance gate but instead, was continuously redirecting Child A away from the shared gate that led to the preschool playground. Caregiver Thomas stated she was updating the child care application while on the playground when she realized there were only three children present. Caregiver Thomas asked for another teacher to watch the three children while she searched for Child A, in which she found him with Director Sheffield in the hallway inside the facility approximately two minutes later.

Caregiver Warnes and Caregiver Brady both stated that they were outside on the preschool playground while Caregiver Thomas was on the toddler playground. Caregiver Warnes and Caregiver Brady stated that they did not observe Child A walk through the shared gate of the preschool classroom and did not believe he escaped through the preschool side. Caregiver Warnes stated that she did not recall observing Caregiver Thomas walking around the toddler playground monitoring the children as they played but did not have any supervision concerns.

CI Ibbotson reviewed an incident report regarding Child A. The document states: "To Whom It May Concern: On May 17, 2023, around 11:45 a.m., Child A was able to exit the playground area and cross the parking lot of Brighton Learning Center . He was picked up by a bus aide for the North Kansas City School District that drops students off at Brighton Learning Center (BLC) and brought to Lisa Sheffield, Director. When brought back, the teacher, Elisa Thomas, was actively looking for him and wasn't sure how he had gotten out of the fence as she was outside, in ratio, with four children."

"After Child A was returned to the classroom, Manager Alecia Jones was notified and gave the following instruction: contact Child A's parents and contact the State of Missouri Compliance Office, both of which were done. Compliance Inspector (CI) Robyn Embree took a report, as well as directed Director Sheffield to write an incident report for the parents to sign and have Caregiver Thomas complete a supervision training to keep on file."

"Further disciplinary action is being discussed and a meeting with the toddler room is scheduled for May 18, 2023, to make necessary changes. Both gates to the playground have been locked and signage posted regarding parent pick up/ drop off to ensure that the gates are securely latched moving forward and no further incidents of this manner reoccur."

CI Ibbotson conducted a walkthrough of the facility and observed a padlock on both toddler and preschool gate entrances of the playground with a note that stated, "As a safety precaution, we are no longer allowing picks up or drop offs at the fence . Please go through the building. Thank you." CI Ibbotson also observed the distance between the toddler playground located on the north side of the facility in comparison to the empty parking lot where Child A was later found , which was located on the south side of the facility. The exact distance between the two locations were unknown.

On May 22, 2023, Director Sheffield contacted CI Ibbotson and stated that management had met with the toddler teachers and now required staff to turn their personal cell phones into the office upon arrival at each shift , as well as document attendance every hour. Director Sheffield also stated that a new fence installation was scheduled to fix both entrance gates on the toddler and preschool playgrounds. Director Sheffield stated that the termination of Caregiver Thomas was still being debated and was waiting to hear from the OOC regarding the action steps that the facility would need to take following the incident.

On May 24, 2023, CI Ibbotson reviewed video footage from May 17, 2023. At 11:16 a.m., two caregivers were present on the toddler playground while Child A was observed playing with the open front entrance gate that exited to the parking lot . After 10 seconds, one caregiver was observed walking away from the toddler playground, leaving Caregiver Thomas alone with the children. Caregiver Thomas was observed standing near the facility before sitting down as she pulled out an item from her pocket that she continued to look at while Child A stood at the opened gate . Child A was observed to the left of Caregiver Thomas as her back was against the facility wall. Child A was then observed reaching towards the latch area of the gate within 24 seconds of the start of the video, which he then stood at the opening, staring at the parking lot for 32 seconds before stepping outside of the playground and onto the step that led to the parking lot. At 11:17:12 a.m., Child A was observed outside of the toddler playground before stepping down into the parking lot and walked to his left (south bound), out of the camera and Caregiver Thomas' view. At 11:18:52 a.m., Child A was observed walking in the facility's front parking lot on the opposite side of the toddler playground. Child A was observed walking away from the facility and towards the road before turning left into an empty parking lot. Child A was observed walking in the empty parking lot towards the empty building before walking out of the camera view at 11:19:48 a.m. At 11:20:10 a.m., a school bus was observed arriving at the empty building parking lot and stopped out of camera view at 11:20:15 a.m. Child A was then observed at 11:20:36 a.m. being held by Bus Aide Malotte and walking back towards the facility. At 11:20:51, both Child A and Bus Aide Malotte were out of view of the camera.

On May 25, 2023, CI Ibbotson interviewed Parent A who stated that she was informed by Director Sheffield on May 17, 2023, that Child A had escaped from the playground and found in the parking lot . Parent A stated she was unsure of the details regarding how Child A was found in the parking lot but was informed after management reviewed video footage that he was missing for approximately two and a half minutes. Parent A stated that she was upset about the incident but decided to focus on the positive outcome that Child A was found and returned safely .

On May 25, 2023, CI Ibbotson interviewed Bus Aide Malotte who stated that she observed Child A alone in the empty parking lot next door to the facility on May 17, 2023, walking towards a busy intersection. Bus Aide Malotte stated that the bus immediately turned around and picked Child A up to return him to the facility .

CORRECTIVE MEASURES

CORRECTIVE MEASURE	COMPLETED (Y/N)	COMPLETED DATE
The facility shall have all staff members (paid employees and paid/unpaid volunteers) obtain one clock hour of approved training on supervision, outside of the Brighton Learning Center Inc 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	Yes	1/2/2024

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.

CORRECTIVE MEASURE

The facility shall update their disaster and emergency preparedness plan to include a plan for child elopment from the facility. The plan shall be submitted to Child Care Compliance Section for approval, and then the plan shall be reviewed with all staff members (paid employees and paid/unpaid volunteers). All staff members shall sign a statement confirming they have reviewed the plan and agree to follow it. The signed statements shall be submitted to the Child Care Compliance Section.

COMPLETED (Y/N)

Yes

COMPLETED DATE

8/22/2023

DISPOSITION

SUBSTANTIATED

DISPOSITION DATE

6/9/2023

APPROVING SUPERVISOR

FOX, ROMENA