

Ratio and supervision problems continue to occur on the lower level between the three year old preschool and four/five year old prek rooms when the fours/fives children travel over to the threes area to use the restroom area. This has been reviewed with this center repeatedly during licensing visits as well.

Staff and documentation also indicates that, at least, the "infant B" room has been over capacity. The center director and staff acknowledge this room has been approved for a maximum of eight children at any one time. The room has included 10 children on occasion.

Staff generally indicated that the center director's schedule is not routine and that staff usually do not know when she is coming in to the center in the morning or that she may leave during the day for extended periods. Staff stated she may come in at 8am but other times may not be at the center until 9am. Staff generally indicated the director is not quick to come to the rooms when called upon for assistance. Staff have indicated they have also been out of ratio when they need to use the restroom and there is no one available to fill in for them when they leave the room.

The center director maintained that she was not aware of the ratio concerns. She states she is at the center usually by 8am or 9am if she is closing the center. She stated she does have to leave the center to attend meetings, obtain supplies for the center, or do bank drops for the center. She stated she may very occasionally leave the center to take a lunch break herself. She stated all of the staff may not always know of her comings and goings. She denied that there has been a focus on cutting hours but that there has been a focus on using labor hours efficiently. She stated staff have been on staff about clocking in early unless they are needed to clock in early and that staff should clock out and leave if they are extra staff and are no longer needed.

Special Notes and Action Required:

Upon interviewing the staff throughout the center and reviewing some of the paperwork provided, there is enough information to indicate that this center has routinely been out of ratio in the variou program rooms throughout the center, especially in the mornings. It is concerning that the staff all maintain that the center director was well aware of the ratio concerns and that staff stated that documentation had been provided to her to demonstrate this but that the center director maintains that she was not made aware of the ratio concerns. It is also concerning that the staff person left in charge to handle these situations is also expected to be in ratio in her own program room while attempting to figure out the staffing for the rest of the center. This has been the arrangement since the assistant director has been gone on leave. The center director states that under normal circumstances she and her assistant usually have their schedules staggered so that one of them is at the center at 7am and the other comes in at 9am and closes the center. It is recommended that the center director either come in to the center at 7am from this point forward until the assistant returns or that the center have another designated staff who can fill in for Cathy so that Cathy can be free to be in charge of the center operations at the busy morning time.

Ratio at nap time was also discussed where the center is using the exception to ratio for the one hour period at rest time when all children are down and resting in rooms with no infants. There was discussion regarding this rule and that ratio in the building must still be maintained even if the room itself is out of ratio for up to the one hour period meaning that there have to be enough staff in the building so that each program room can go back into ratio at any given moment. The center is also reminded that this exception only applies when ALL children are down and resting. If children are up and about in the room then the room shall remain in ratio and the exception shall not be applied.

While at the center it was also discovered that children are regularly being brought to the kitchen area with staff so that staff can obtain afternoon snack items for the lower level while still maintaining ratio. The center director was advised that this is not appropriate and that children shall not be in the kitchen area at any time.

It is clear that the center needs to adjust staff schedules and/or add staff so that ratio is maintained at ALL times. If ratio can not be accomplished then the center will not be able to accept additional children. The staff and director have been advised of this. The center will need to also plan for staff breaks and restroom times so that ratio can also be maintained during these times.

If the center director was truly not aware of the ratio concerns, this suggests poor management of the center and/or a serious lack of communication between the staff and the director. Much discussion occurred with the director regarding these concerns. It appears there also could have been better planning between the director and her superiors at Kindercare and the rest of the center staff for the assistant director's planned extended leave since the center knew that her role would have to be temporarily filled in her absence. The director should also ensure, at miniumum, that her second in charge should be aware when she is leaving the center so that someone is always designated in charge.

The center director stated she would make schedule changes effective tomorrow (12/18/14) so that there would be additional staff present at the center earlier in the mornings. Email follow up was sent from the center director to the licensing consultant as

requested later on in the day stating further that the extra staff would also be utilized as a "floater" to assist with staff bathroom breaks, that the center director will be reviewing the center's "CSR" sheets regularly as an additional tool to help ensure ratio requirements are being maintained, four year old prek room have added group restroom times into their posted daily schedule, and that snack will be delivered to the lower level by kitchen staff, director, assistant director, or floating staff so that children are not in the kitchen.

As additional follow up to this report, the center is directed to provide documentation that staff are aware that ratio shall be maintained at all times and that review has occurred with the lower level staff the expectations for supervision of restroom activities and ratio requirements being reinforced with staff specific to the four/fives room children when leaving the area to use the restroom outside of those group times that have been built into their daily schedule. The documentation shall include staff signing off that they received and understand the information, including the director. The center shall also provide the date of the next scheduled staff meeting and the agenda for the meeting with all staff also signing off that they attended the meeting. The agenda should include discussion about ratio requirements and discussion about general communication throughout the center. Please provide the requested information within 30 days of receiving this report. This should allow enough time for a staff meeting to take place.

Heidi Hungate, MSW
DHS Child Care Licensing Consultant

Consultant's Signature:

Date:

12/18/2014

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heidi Hungate". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'H' and 'H'.