

of additional concern. Apparently, Kayla who walked in on this thought Deb was "hitting" the child. The center director stated she asked staff Deb to speak to staff Kayla.

Staff and director state there was no written incident report done and that there was no communication with the parent(s) of the child on the day of this incident.

Center director only became aware of concerns that there was "shaking" of the child when the child's mother called her on 2/23/15.

The child (4 years old) is described by all to have significant behavioral issues at the center: Defiant with almost every request, assaultive to staff and peers, uses foul language regularly, etc. The staff admitted to feeling overwhelmed with this child's behavior at times. The center involved AEA in Sept 2014 and had been documenting what they were doing according to the AEA plan. The center director stated the child had been sent home many times because of behavior. The center director stated the staff had come to her at times voicing frustration. The center director stated she would try to offer suggestions as she could. The center director stated the child would also visit her office for "breaks" at times.

The center director stated previous concerns with staff Deb involved director having conversations with her about inappropriate voice tone, angry words with the children, and too high expectations for the children at times. Staff Deb confirmed this herself as well when she was interviewed indicating, maybe "two or three" conversations since she has worked at the center (2008). Staff Deb also reported that she was previously investigated 25 years ago when she worked at a different center (close in 1998 she stated). Deb states she was bent down tying a three year old's shoe when the child kicked her. Deb stated her response was to slap the child in the face. Deb reports that she has worked in the child care field at centers, preschool, and Head Start for a combination of 39 years, worked at St. Alphonsus since 2008. She is the lead teacher in the four/five year old room which is also part of the Voluntary Preschool Grant program.

Staff Deb indicated she used to regularly cover children's faces/heads loosely with the nap blanket to get them to calm down at nap time. She described this was also because the room is bright. She described this as being presented to the children as a sort of a game where she floats the blanket above them to rest on them and tells them that she is putting "sleepy sand" on top of the blanket. She states this is no longer happening. She states on the day of this incident the child was being uncooperative with getting to the cot, running around the room, etc. She stated she covered the child's head with the blanket and described that the child was kicking his feet. She stated she told the child she would count until the child calmed down and that she would then take the blanket off. She stated the blanket was loose. She stated she was patting the bed (cot) also to calm the child and described that these methods usually calmed this child. She stated she knew the child did not like to have the blanket on in general and that they would typically leave the blanket off of this child entirely until the child was sleeping. She stated the child definitely did not choke or cough or have the blanket wrapped around the neck at any time. She denied shaking the child.

Staff Deb stated she did talk to staff Kayla about this after she became aware of the concern reported to the center director because the center director asked her to do this. Staff Deb stated staff Kayla though staff Deb wash hitting the child. Staff Deb stated she clarified for staff Kayla what was going on.

Staff Deb stated they do not make the children sleep at nap time. She stated they do have the children lay down and rest for 45 minutes.

Staff Deb stated the staff would alternate dealing with this child. When asked about training resources, staff Deb stated she has asked for PBIS training for over a year. She stated they were provided a short meeting to discuss this at AEA but no certificate was issued and this was not the formal training. She stated she believed that the center director was still trying to work out when they could actually take the full training.

Child involved in this incident no longer attended the center after 2/23/15.

It is noted that the licensing consultant was aware of some of the information related to this report because the center director had called the licensing consultant previously. At that time it was presented as an issue only of nap blankets being placed on children's heads at naptime and where a disgruntled staff might be contacting licensing as this person made threats to call DHS on her way out. Through this conversation with the director the licensing consultant learned about the blankets being used to cover the children's heads/faces and much discussion occurred regarding the inappropriateness of that. The center director stated that would stop immediately.

The director and staff interviewed stated they are no longer putting blankets over the children's faces/heads and do not allow the children to do this to themselves either.

Information was provided to the licensing consultant by DHS Wischler regarding her conversation with former staff Kayla. DHS Wischler states that Kayla described observing the child standing up with blanket over the head and staff Deb shaking the child by holding onto the child's shoulders. DHS Wischler states that Kayla stated she abruptly left room to tell the center director, Shelly.

Special Notes and Action Required:

It is determined that there is evidence to suggest, at the very least, that reasonable and careful supervision were not provided relative to this reported incident with regard to the use of the nap blanket being placed over the child's head with the description of the child kicking feet and obviously not wanting the blanket placed or, generally speaking, the placement of blankets over children's heads and faces at any time given safety concerns that could present with this arrangement. Upon consultation with the licensing consultant, the center director and staff state they are no longer putting blankets over children's faces/heads at any time and are monitoring to ensure that the children do not do this to themselves either.

It is not possible to determine that the rule for discipline has specifically been violated relative to this report as it can not be determined which individual is more credible than the other in their report of what actually occurred. It is noted, however, that at least some of staff Deb's responses to children in circumstances where the children are being less than compliant with staff Deb's expectations has been concerning, given the history provided for staff Deb both by herself as well as the center director. There are also expressed concerns regarding staff Deb's expectations for children based on their age and developmental level.

Of additional concern both for what is cited and what is not cited is the particular child's quite difficult behaviors. The staff and center director acknowledged knowing that the staff and director felt frustrated and exasperated by the child's behaviors. The situation could have easily contributed to inappropriate responses by staff who had little other resources or behavior specific training to fall back on when trying to deal with such an arrangement on a daily basis.

The center director states she plans to have the staff take the PBIS training and knows they are interested in this but has not been able to schedule this yet. She stated she was not sure when the next training is scheduled. The center director shall investigate this further and provide to the licensing consultant the date(s) for when staff are scheduled to complete the formal training. The center regularly works with their CCRR consultant, and it is noted that the CCRR consultant can help the center director find and schedule the training for staff. This needs to be a priority.

The center director is directed to closely monitor this situation and to take immediate action if there are future concerns as improper supervision/discipline of children will not be tolerated by licensing standards. It is recommended that the center director implement a weekly face to face meeting with staff Deb (and any others needing guidance based on observations) to provide additional support, monitoring, guidance, and supervision. The center director shall then guide the staff to appropriate training courses that will provide additional support in any areas of concern. The center director shall also set a regular plan for time that she will spend observing the child care rooms throughout the center. It would be a good idea to monitor at times when staff are not necessarily aware of the monitoring. Voice tone, interactions, etc. can be monitored by overhearing what is taking place in the program room even from the hallway area when staff do not necessarily know this is being monitored.

Follow up shall be provided to the licensing consultant within 10 days of the receipt of this report.

Heidi Hungate, MSW
DHS Child Care Licensing Consultant

Consultant's Signature:



Date:

03/25/2015