

## CHILD CARE CENTER COMPLAINT

|                             |                             |                             |                          |                     |       |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-------|
| <b>Name of Center:</b>      | The Tree House at Northview | <b>Enrollment:</b>          | 224                      | <b>License ID:</b>  | 46653 |
| <b>Street:</b>              | 205 NW 18th ST              | <b>City:</b>                | Ankeny                   | <b>IA Zip Code:</b> | 50023 |
| <b>County:</b>              | Polk                        |                             |                          |                     |       |
| <b>Mailing Address:</b>     | 205 NW 18th ST              |                             |                          |                     |       |
| <b>Mailing City:</b>        | Ankeny                      | <b>IA Zip Code:</b>         | 50023                    |                     |       |
| <b>Director's Name:</b>     | Mindy Seeman/Missey Michel  | <b>Center Phone Number:</b> | 515-777-3791             |                     |       |
| <b>On-Site Supervisors:</b> | Amanda Zust/Sammi Orndorff  | <b>E-Mail Address:</b>      | melinda@treehouseglc.com |                     |       |

**Date of Complaint:** 09-03-2024 **Date of Visit:** 09-04-2024

☒ Scheduled ☐ Unannounced ☐ NA

☒ Non-Compliance with Regulations Found ☐ Compliance with Regulations Found

**RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE**

☒ NO CHANGES to licensing status recommended

☐ PROVISIONAL license from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

☐ SUSPENSION of License

☐ REVOCATION of License

**Complaint Details:**

Did this complaint result in a serious injury? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Did this complaint result in a death to a child? ☐ Yes ☒ No

**Summary of Complaint:**

It is alleged that on 9/3/2024 an unknown child under the age of 2 was locked outside of The Treehouse Growing and Learning Center for at least 5 minutes without staff being aware.

**Licensing Rules Relevant to the Complaint:**

109.10(16)a The center and supervisor shall ensure that staff knows names and number of children assigned. Staff shall provide careful supervision.

**Inspection Findings:**

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I received the concerns and reviewed the complaint intake information; I then was in contact with Child Protection Worker (CPW) Erica Jones who was assigned to also complete a child protection assessment of this situation.

I was in contact with the directors of both The Treehouse Growing Center and The Tree House at Northview; as the complaint information did not include detail of which center this is alleged to have occurred; and it was confirmed this incident occurred at The Tree House Northview.

CPW Jones and I met with the owner (Missy); Director and Assistant Director on 9/4/24 regarding concerns a child younger than two had been left unattended on the outdoor play area in this center on/about 9/3/24 for approximately 9.5 minutes. The center staff learned of the concerns and the onsite supervisor located the child on the playground, placing the child back in the classroom. It was explained that there were three staff involved and that face to name or "head counts" were in error as it was believed this process was rushed and not organized. The director and owner provided additional instruction and coaching; that taking attendance prior to leaving the outdoor playground, along with when the children return to their classroom is going to be slowed down to ensure accuracy. The center does use an electronic version of "face to name" which will remain with the addition of having the children line up prior to entering the building and taking attendance; then staying orderly while attendance is taken again when the children and staff return to the classroom. Video documentation was reviewed and indicated the child was on the opposite side of the playground from the exterior door, however when the child realized his class had gone inside; the child returned to the door and waited. Lastly, a staff will be designated daily to take attendance instead of this task changing through a shift.

The director and the owner indicated there were not performance concerns with the staff involved prior to this incident.

CPW Jones and I spoke with staff AH who indicated staff BP said they were completing attendance prior to entering the building after outdoor time; AH was not able to recall if someone took attendance again when the class returned to their room. This was a busy time of day as upon re-entering the building; diaper changes commenced and preparation for the next activity.

Staff GW was interviewed; who indicated they were helping non-walking children and staff BH was counting and that BH indicated "everything was ok". Staff GW was filling in the day this occurred and usually works in another area. Staff GW did not know who was to take attendance when the children returned to the room; and that staff AH started changing diapers as this is a process with several children in the room. GW indicated receiving coaching and further instructions--such as face to name (attendance) completed when the children are lined up and returning to the classroom by a designated staff. Additionally, staff are to do a last look around of the playground prior to re-entering the building. The on-site supervisor brought the child in from outside; albeit after the rest of the class.

Staff BP indicated believing they had counted 12 children that day (all of them). BP was using the assigned iPad to match name to faces; then lead the class into their classroom. Shortly after BP noticed the child missing and that they were looking inside for that child. The on-site supervisor then brought the child into the classroom. BP indicated having a more structured face to name process by having the children line up; and a designated staff assigned to complete face to name attendance; the second count being completed and staff surveying the outdoor play area to ensure no children were left behind etc.

CPW Jones documents speaking with the child's parents that confirm they were informed of the situation immediately and have viewed the video of this incident. The parents also indicated meeting at the center with administrative staff regarding this concern. Neither parent identified to the CPW having had previous concerns regarding care provided by center staff. Parents indicated being informed that staff received additional training and steps in taking attendance and "sweeping" the outdoor play area prior to entering the building etc. The parents indicated being "satisfied" with the response from the center response to this incident.

9/30/24 I was notified the child protection assessments were confirmed by a preponderance of evidence for denial of critical care.

The staff involved were interviewed and provided consistent information that was verified with video of the child (under age 2) having been left unattended on the outdoor play area for 9.5 minutes. The outdoor play area is enclosed with a tall chain link fence. The ambient air temperature on the day this occurred was in the 80s. The child did not incur physical injury however the risk of harm to the child, who is under age 2 is substantial without careful supervision. There is sufficient information that a licensing violation occurred. Non-compliance with licensing regulation has occurred under Iowa Code 109.10(16)a The center and supervisor shall ensure that staff knows names and number of children assigned. Staff shall provide careful supervision.

**Special Notes and Action Required:**

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Center owner and admin provided retraining and additional structure for face to name attendance procedures to include having the children line up; having a designated staff person completing face to name prior to leaving the playground and upon re-entering the building; and staff "sweeping" the outdoor play area to ensure no one has been left behind.

Center owner and admin informed parents and met with them immediately and provided transparency with what occurred, how long and actions taken after.

No further actions required at this time.

**Consultant's Signature:**

Maggie Gibson, SWIV

**Date:**

10-28-2024