Iowa Department of Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER COMPLAINT

Name of Center: VGM Child Care Center **Enrollment:** 53 **License ID:** 52352

Street: 1111 Van Miller Wy **City:** Waterloo **IA** **Zip Code:** 50701 **County:** Black Hawk

Mailing Address: 1026 E Seerley BLVD

Mailing City: Cedar Falls **IA** **Zip Code:** 50613

Director's Name: Jay Mattson **Center Phone Number:** 319-824-4214

On-Site Supervisors: Amy Junkins & Sara Koester **E-Mail Address:** admined@cuccc.org

Date of Complaint: 07-31-2025 **Date of Visit:** 08-01-2025

[X] Scheduled **[ ]** Unannounced **[ ]** NA

[X] Non-Compliance with Regulations Found **[ ]** Compliance with Regulations Found

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE

[X] 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:

On 07/31/25 a concern was reported regarding VGM Child Care Center in Waterloo. It is alleged on 07/30/25 at approximately 10:45 am Emily R. grabbed a one-year-old child and shoved the child causing him to fall and hit his head against a wall and/or she picked the child up by the arm and shoved him against the couch he was sitting on. The child cried immediately. There were no injuries. The parents were not informed about the incident until 07/31/25.

It is also alleged that on 07/11/25 a parent went to the room to pick her child up and Emily was sitting in the back of the room on her cell phone. The child's diaper was "poopy". The parent changed the diaper and the child was screaming because his bottom was raw.

Licensing Rules Relevant to the Complaint:

109.10(14)a The center and supervisor shall ensure that staff knows names and number of children assigned. Staff shall provide careful supervision.

109.12(2)a-d The center shall not use as a form of discipline:Center does not use corporal punishment including spanking, shaking, or slapping.Punishment which is humiliating or frightening or causes pain or discomfort is not allowed. Children shall never be locked in a room or closet. When restraints are part of a treatment plan for a child with a disability authorized by a parent and a psychologist or psychiatrist, staff shall receive training on the safe and appropriate use of the restraint.Punishment or threat of punishment associated with illness, toilet training, or food or rest is not to be used.No child is subject to verbal abuse, threats, derogatory remarks about child or child's family.

Inspection Findings:

On 07/31/25 I received an email from Jamie Lopez, the on-site supervisor, and she informed me of the reported incident.

On 07/31/25 I had a collateral contact with Jill Buhrow from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). We planned to meet at the center on 08/01/25.

On 08/01/25 Jill Buhrow from HHS and I made an announced visit to VGM Child Care Center in

Waterloo. We met with Jamie Lopez, the on-site supervisor. Ms. Lopez states Hannah R. was the assistant in the room and there was a one on one nurse in the classroom for another child.

Ms. Buhrow and I watched the video recording from the room. At 10:45 am Emily R. puts the child in a chair for time out. Ms. Lopez states time out is not supposed to be used in this room because they are only one year old. They do not use time out until the age of three. Another child walks up to the child victim and pushes this child's head in an effort to push the child out of the chair. The child victim begins to cry. Emily then walks over to the child victim and appears to grab him and pushes him aggressively back and the child hits his head on the back of the chair/wall/crib. It is difficult to see exactly what the child's head hits but the crib moves. Emily then grabs the child victim by the shoulders and sets him on the floor and she removes the chair. Emily then grabs the crying child again and puts him in a crib because he is crying. She then takes him out of the crib.

Ms. Lopez is then seen walking in the room. She stated she walked in because she had been watching the camera and witnessed how Emily acted. Ms. Lopez told Emily to take a break. Ms. Lopez states Emily looked frustrated.

Ms. Lopez states she called Sara Patterson, the HR person from CUCCC, to come to VGM to review the footage. Ms. Patterson also met Emily.

The assistant, Hannah R., appears to be watching what occurred but completely downplays what occurred in a written statement. Hannah was not available to interview the day of the visit. The nurse in the classroom did not appear to witness anything. She was engaged with her one on one child.

Ms. Lopez states the mother was notified of the incident on 07/31/25 at 9:09 am. She said parents are usually notified on the same day as the incident. An incident report was created on 07/31/25. The child did not have any injuries. Ms. Lopez states the parent was not contacted right away because the administration was doing an investigation.

The incident report reads, "(The child) was set in the time out chair aggressively. Sat for 3 mins. The staff comes back to (the child) as he is crying grabs him aggressively by the arms, jolts (the child's) head back hitting it on the crib next to the chair."

I received an email from Sara Patterson, the HR person, to Amy Junkins, an on-site supervisor from another site. The email states that Ms. Patterson spoke with Emily R. about face timing someone while at work in a room. Emily said she was talking with a co-worker about how her wisdom teeth surgery went. Ms. Patterson states she told Emily she cannot be on the phone in the room and at one point Emily's back was turned to the children and she was not providing proper care. Ms. Patterson spoke with Emily about the reported incident and putting her hands on a child. Emily responded to her and said the child's head did not hit the wall and she did not realize the force she used. Emily was shown the video of the incident.

Hannah R. had a written statement that reads, "(A child) and (the child victim) were in the 'calm corner' and both wanted the chair. (The child victim) was in it first and then (the other child) sat down. After (the other child) sat in it with (the child victim) they both got upset with each other and started hitting/kicking each other. Emily then went over to desclate the situation and scold them about using unkind hands. Both of them still continued to get upset and use unkind hands so Emily took the chair away."

Hannah's statement was not an accurate description of what the video recording showed occurred. I have additional concerns that Hannah witnessed the incident and did not report it to the administration. I believe all staff members may need to be trained in reporting concerns.

Emily's statement reads, "I would like to come to you to address the incident that happened yesterday. I feel that the whole situation was twisted into something it was not and it was all blown out of context. The way she explained it to me was not correct and did not happen. I would like for someone else to review that camera footage. I don't know if the camera angle was just not the best but I can assure you what I was told they thought happened, did not happen. What had happened was I got up and I went over to the child and I did NOT forcibly grab him. I very lightly placed my hands on his arms under his shoulders to try and direct his attention to me and get him to calm down, there was no force involved at all I was very lightly touching his arms. He then proceeded to lean himself back. I never physically moved him back! I also can 100% assure that he did not hit his head either, there were two other people sitting right there, they and myself would have heard if he hit his head. It was told at first that 'He hit his head on the crib' I said no he did not and she showed me the video then she said 'He hit his head on the wall' which also was not correct and did not happen no did I push him back. Like I mentioned there were also two other people in the room sitting tight there they would have heard if his head hit anything! That whole situation was perceived in the wrong way and as something that did not happen."

There was additional information in the statement from Emily that is not relevant to my complaint and will not be included.

Emily is no longer employed at the center so I did not personally interview her. The video I watched was evidence enough to determine Emily did use excessive force in moving the child multiple times and the child did hit his head on either the back of the chair, wall or crib when Emily forcibly pushed him.

Special Notes and Action Required:

109.12(2)a-e. Discipline does not allow for corporal punishment; punishment that causes humiliation, fear, pain or discomfort. Discipline does not allow for punishment or threat of punishment associated with a child's illness, lack of progress in toilet training, or in connection with food or rest. Punishment which is humiliating or frightening or causes pain or discomfort is not allowed. VIOLATED. I reviewed the video recording of the incident. I observed Emily forcibly moving the child multiple times and the child did hit his head on either the back of the chair, wall or crib when Emily forcibly pushed him.

109.10 (16)a. Supervision. The center director and on-site supervisor shall ensure that each staff member, substitute, or volunteer knows the number and names of children assigned to that staff member, substitute, or volunteer for care. Assigned staff, substitutes, and volunteers shall provide careful supervision. VIOLATED. A staff member who forcibly reacts to a child in the manner observed is not providing reasonable supervision. Additionally, she did have a previous incident where she was on a personal call while in a classroom and in ratio. She was not providing careful supervision for the children.

Currently, the status of the center's license is unchanged. If you would like to respond to this report, please do so in writing and I will include the information in the licensing file.

I have concerns that an assistant in the room was seen on video watching the aggressive actions of Emily and she did not intervene to stop it, she did not report it to the administration and she downplayed what occurred in her written statement. I would like staff members to be trained on expectations of stepping in when they observe inappropriate actions in the classroom and at the very least they should report their concerns to the administration right away. They are all mandatory reporters.

I also have concerns that the parents were not notified the day of the incident. I understand the administration wanted to do their own investigation, but the parents should have been notified the day of the incident that their child was involved in a concerning incident and that the program was investigating. You can update the parents when you get more information.

It should be noted that Jamie Lopez is no longer employed at the center and Amy Junkins and Sara Koester are the interim co-on-site supervisors until a new on-site supervisor is hired for the site.

Consultant's Signature:

Rebecca Frost

Date:

08-28-2025