Iowa Department of Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER COMPLAINT

Name of Center: Little Knights Learning Center - Mechanicsville **Enrollment:** 47 **License ID:** 42543

Street: 609 125th ST **City:** Mechanicsville **IA** **Zip Code:** 52306 **County:** Cedar

Mailing Address: 609 125th ST

Mailing City: Mechanicsville **IA** **Zip Code:** 52306

Director's Name: Maria Porter **Center Phone Number:** 563-432-6752

On-Site Supervisors: N/A **E-Mail Address:** mporter@north-cedarstu.org

Date of Complaint: 03-27-2023 **Date of Visit:** 03-30-2023

[ ] Scheduled **[X]** 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:

Two staff members were using inappropriate discipline that left marks on children including bruises and scratches.

Licensing Rules Relevant to the Complaint:

109.4(4) Requirements and procedures for mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse shall be posted where they can be read by staff and parents.

109.12(2)b Punishment which is humiliating or frightening or causes pain or discomfort is not allowed. Mechanical restrains shall never be used. If part of a treatment plan for a child with a disability, staff shall receive training.

109.12(5)e The provider shall follow safe sleep practices recommended by AAP for infants under one year of age:Infants shall always be placed on their back for sleep.Infants shall be placed on a firm mattress with a tight fitted sheet that meets Consumer Product Safety Commission federal standards.Infants shall not be allowed to sleep on a bed, sofa, air mattress or other soft surface. No child will be allowed to sleep in any items not designed for sleeping but not limited to, an infant seat, car seat, swing, bouncy seat.No toys, soft objects, stuffed animals, pillows, bumper pads, blankets, or loose bedding shall be allowed in the sleeping area with the infant.No co-sleeping shall be allowed.Sleeping infants shall be actively observed by sight and sound.If an alternate sleeping position is needed, a signed physician or physician assistant authorization with statement of medical reason is required.

Inspection Findings:

This worker and HHS employee, Jennie Clemens, met with Jenny Horman (Elementary Principal/Curriculum Director), Maria Porter (Director), and Rick Scott (Law Enforcement).

A parent brought concerns to Mark Dohmen (Superintendent) Mark then asked Jenny to review the cameras. Jenny Horman (Elementary Principal/Curriculum Director) stated that she reviewed cameras. The camera footage is stored for 2 weeks. The footage showed several concerning incidents. These incidents were discussed with Mark Dohmen (Superintendent) and Maria Porter (Director).

Staff A and Staff B were placed on administrative leave on 3/17 and their employment was terminated on 3/20 due to the concerns seen in video footage.

109.12(2)b. Punishment which is humiliating or frightening or causes pain or discomfort is not allowed. Mechanical restrains shall never be used.
VIOLATED.
3/16 11:29 am- Staff A was noted to throw water on a child who was falling asleep in a highchair.
3/10 11:03 am- Staff A was noted to throw water on a child again for falling asleep in a high chair.
3/10 11:31 am- 2 toddlers were fighting over a toy. Staff A hit the hand of a child, picked the child up by their wrist, carried the child 5-6 feet across the room, and dropped the child on a play mat in the center of the room. The child was in the air when dropped and not set down which also could have caused injury. Staff A did not share that the child had been disciplined with the center director or the parents. Picking a child up by the wrist could have caused significant injury including Nursemaid's elbow or a dislocated elbow.
3/10 11:56 am- Staff B threw a shoe a child while getting her to lay down for rest.

The following concerns were shared but not observed on the cameras:
-A child was left in the bathroom unattended to cry so as to not disturb other children.
-A child had marks on their cheeks that did not align with the story told to the parents by staff. Staff A did report that she caused the bruises to the child's cheeks on this same day. She stated that she had been pinching the child's cheeks in effort to get her to smile. Staff A stated that she must have pinched the child too hard. This information was captured in the electronic messages and also during the interview with Staff A. Staff A noted that she did pinch other children's cheeks and she was not aware of other staff that pinched the cheeks of children. Staff A had shown poor decision making during other incidents that were captured on video by the observation cameras placed in the room. These include interventions to children that were likely to cause injuries. In this specific case, the child did receive an injury. This pattern of poor decisions make this behavior not accidental and likely to reoccur.
- A child had a scratch and red marks on the back of her neck. Staff reported that this was the result of another child climbing over the child while they were both on the floor. Both staff in the room were engaged in other activities and were unable to stop this from occurring. Staff A noted that those injuries were accidental. The observation cameras in the room were not able to observe this due to it reportedly occurring behind shelves/ cupboards in the room. An incident report was completed for that incident and shared with the parents.

109.12(5)e. The provider shall follow safe sleep practices recommended by AAP for infants under one year of age: Infants shall always be placed on their back for sleep. Infants shall be placed on a firm mattress with a tight fitted sheet that meets Consumer Product Safety Commission federal standards. Infants shall not be allowed to sleep on a bed, sofa, air mattress or other soft surface. No child will be allowed to sleep in any items not designed for sleeping but not limited to, an infant seat, car seat, swing, bouncy seat. VIOLATED.
-When infants fell asleep in their highchair staff threw water in their face to wake them up instead of gently transferring them to a crib.

109.4(4) Requirements and procedures for mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse shall be posted where they can be read by staff and parents. VIOLATED.
-Staff A and Staff B both allowed each other to use inappropriate discipline. Children were left with marks and this was not reported. Staff A and Staff B were informed of these requirements in a training they took, by the posting displayed and by the staff handbook.

Special Notes and Action Required:

The staff involved in the incidents were terminated.

Jenny Horman (Elementary Principal/Curriculum Director), Maria Porter (Director), and Mark Dohmen (Superintendent) are Mandatory Reporters. They should have reported these incidents on 3/17/23. They waited until 3/27/2013. These three individuals are strongly encouraged to retake the training for Mandatory Reporters: https://iowaccrr.org/training/MCART/

The center is strongly encouraged to review cameras more frequently to ensure age appropriate discipline.

Consultant's Signature:

Heidi Brown

Date:

08-29-2023