



STATE OF MICHIGAN
 DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS
 LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
 GOVERNOR

ORLENE HAWKS
 DIRECTOR

January 24, 2023

Joyce Cooper
 Community Action Agency of South-Central MI
 175 Main Street
 Battle Creek, MI 49014

RE: License #: DC130088768
 Investigation #: 2023D0208004
 Doris Hale Child Development Center

Dear Ms. Cooper:

I conducted a special investigation because the child care licensing division received a complaint against your facility that related to licensing rules or law. The allegations were related to the following:

R400.8125 Staff; volunteer; requirements
 R400.8140 Discipline

The details of the allegations are in the attached report. To investigate the allegations:

- I interviewed the person who made the complaint, program director, licensee designee, child care staff, and parents.
- I completed an onsite inspection on 12/05/2022.

As a result of this investigation, I recommend no change to the current license status. I did not find any violations. The special investigation report is attached.

During this special investigation:	Yes	No
A rule or law violation was found, and a serious injury or death occurred.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A rule or law violation was found and abuse and/or neglect of a child occurred.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

This report and any related corrective action plans must be filed in your licensing notebook. This report and any related corrective action plans will be online for parents to review under the [Statewide Search for Licensed Child Care Centers and Homes](#).

Please review the enclosed documentation for accuracy and contact me with any questions at (269) 568-2686. In the event that I am not available, and you need to speak to someone immediately, please contact the local office at (517) 284-9730.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roxanne Duckworth". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Roxanne Duckworth, Licensing Consultant
Child Care Licensing Bureau
611 West Ottawa Street
P.O. Box 30664
Lansing, MI 48909

enclosure

**MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS
BUREAU OF COMMUNITY AND HEALTH SYSTEMS
SPECIAL INVESTIGATION REPORT**

I. IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

License #:	DC130088768
Investigation #:	2023D0208004
Complaint Receipt Date:	12/01/2022
Investigation Initiation Date:	12/05/2022
Report Due Date:	01/30/2023
Licensee Name:	Community Action Agency of South-Central MI
Licensee Address:	175 Main Street Battle Creek, MI 49014
Licensee Telephone #:	(269) 965-7766
Administrator:	Joyce Cooper, Designee
Licensee Designee:	Joyce Cooper, Designee
Name of Facility:	Doris Hale Child Development Center
Facility Address:	110 Green Street Battle Creek, MI 49017
Facility Telephone #:	(269) 965-7769
Original Issuance Date:	10/01/1999
License Status:	REGULAR
Effective Date:	12/11/2021
Expiration Date:	12/10/2023
Capacity:	225
Program Type:	CHILD CARE CENTER

II. ALLEGATION(S)

	Violation Established?
Children are yanked by their coats and arms and yelled at by staff to get into line to go inside from the outdoor playground.	No
Additional Findings	No

III. METHODOLOGY

12/01/2022	Special Investigation Intake 2023D0208004
12/05/2022	Special Investigation Initiated - Onsite Arrival: 12:00PM - Departure: 2:27PM. Interviewed the licensee designee, Joyce Cooper, co-director of education and children's services for Community Action Agency Headstart, Rosalyn Jones, program director, Amy Ayres, and child care staff, Jessica Sprague, Aliyah Jones, Amariyonna Martinez, Jocelyn Huerta, and Veronica Steinecke.
01/12/2023	Contact - Telephone call made Spoke with Child A, Child B, and Child C's Mothers. Left a voice mail for Child D and Child E's Mothers.
01/13/2023	Contact - Telephone call made Left a voice mail for Complainant.
01/13/2023	Contact - Document Sent Emailed Complainant.
01/16/2023	Contact - Document Received Email response received from Complainant.
01/17/2023	Exit Conference Spoke with licensee designee, Joyce Cooper.

ALLEGATION: Children are yanked by their coats and arms and yelled at by staff to get into line to go inside from the outdoor playground.

INVESTIGATION: On 12/01/2022 I received a complaint that child care staff were observed yanking children by their arms and coats and yelling at children when getting them into line to go inside from the outdoor playground. This issue has been going on for several months and the concern was brought to the attention of the center. The center staff said they would address the issue and re-train staff, but there has not been any change in staff behaviors.

On 12/05/2022 I conducted an unannounced onsite inspection to Doris Hale Child Development Center. One classroom was closed due to illness. The other four classrooms were open, and I observed children doing circle time, napping, and outdoor play. The children were playing on the front playground right outside of the room I was in, and I was able to observe and listen to them through the windows. The staff were appropriate with the children and interacted with them while they were playing. I observed the two child care staff line the children up at the end of outdoor play time by having each child grab a ring on the rope. Child care staff walked the perimeter of the playground to make sure all children were accounted for and then one child care staff stood at the front of the line and one at the back of the line. The staff counted children and took attendance before heading into the building. I interviewed the licensee designee, Joyce Cooper, co-director of education and children's services for Community Action Agency Headstart, Rosalyn Jones, program director, Amy Ayres, and child care staff, Jessica Sprague, Aliyah Jones, Amariyonna Martinez, Jocelyn Huerta, and Veronica Steinecke. I obtained child information cards, attendance, the center handbook, and copies of the child crisis plan, safe handling of children and behavior management/discipline policies.

Ms. Cooper is the director of operations for Community Action Agency of South-Central MI and the licensee designee for this center. She indicated that she has never observed any of the child care staff inappropriately handling children or yelling at them when she has been at the center visiting. Ms. Cooper has observed child care staff pick up children by scooping them up under their arms with their hands under the child's armpits and indicated that all child care staff are trained on safe handling of children, as well as appropriate and positive methods for behavior management and interacting with children. Child care staff were also recently trained on all of these things again as there is a neighbor near the center that yells at staff outside in front of the children and has called in several complaints/concerns to the center director, the co-director of education and children's services for Community Action, Ms. R. Jones, and herself. One of the issues the neighbor was concerned about was the way staff were treating the children outside, specifically grabbing a child by their arm and yelling in their face. The center did take the neighbor's concerns seriously and re-trained all staff on safe handling of children, appropriate

care, and positive methods for behavior management at a staff meeting in October 2022.

Ms. R. Jones confirmed that she did speak with a neighbor to the center who lives across the street and among his concerns, one was the way children are being handled and treated when lining up to go inside from the playground. The concerns were addressed with the center staff as part of a staff meeting held 10/27/2022, where they had the mental health specialist for Community Action, Kaitlyn Lucker, train staff on safe handling/lifting children, appropriate care and positive behavior management, and the child crisis plan.

Ms. Ayres is the program director at the center. She reported that child care staff were re-trained on appropriate and safe handling of children at a staff meeting held 10/27/2022 by the mental health specialist for Community Action, Ms. Lucker. Ms. Ayres indicated the protocol for handling or lifting a child is to tell the child first that you are going to lift them and then the child is lifted up under the arms, under the armpits. Ms. Ayres did not have concerns with any of the current child care staff and the way that they talk to children and handle them. She reported that there was a staff member terminated prior to the October 2022 training that was observed not safely lifting/handling a child.

Ms. Sprague has been employed with the center for the past five years and works with preschoolers in Hale C classroom. She denied grabbing any children by their arm or coat or yelling at them on the playground, or at any other time. She also has not observed any other staff being inappropriate in the way they are talking to or handling the children. Ms. Sprague reported that the children are required to line up and grab a circle on the rope to go outside and come inside from the playground. There are some children who do not always cooperate with lining up to go inside from the playground, but she handles this by either holding the child's hand to go inside or picking the child up from under their armpits and carrying them to the line. Child care staff do sometimes yell outside, but it is not at children directly. Ms. Sprague indicated she will sometimes yell "five more minutes," or "time to line up." She manages challenging behaviors with children redirecting them and getting down to their level and having a conversation with them. Ms. Sprague confirmed that the child care staff are trained on appropriate care, safe handling, behavior management/conscious discipline, etc. at all staff meetings.

Ms. A. Jones is a parapro in Hale D classroom and has been employed with the center since July 2022. She denied that child care staff are yanking children by their arms or coats or yelling in their faces. Ms. A. Jones indicated there is a neighbor to the center that lives across the street and will come over and yell at staff in front of the children while they are on the playground. Approximately a month or so ago (October/November 2022) the neighbor was yelling and "cussing" at a child care staff member for grabbing a child's arm. The child care staff member was trying to separate two children who were fighting with each other, so the staff member picked up one of the children and put them in their lap. Ms. A. Jones handles challenging

behaviors with children by talking with them in an appropriate tone about the behavior and their feelings. If a situation is escalated and a child must be lifted, Ms. A. Jones tells the child she is lifting them and then lifts them under their arms near their armpits. She reported they recently had training on safe handling and conscious discipline at an all staff meeting and that this is something they regularly discuss at meetings.

Ms. Martinez has been employed with the center for several months and works in Hale E classroom. She confirmed that she has been trained on appropriate care of children, safe handling, and conscious discipline, and said the training was “around Halloween time.” Ms. Martinez has never observed staff yelling in children’s faces or grabbing/yanking their arms or coats and has never treated a child that way herself. She talks to children in a kind tone and gets down to their level when having a conversation with a child. If Ms. Martinez needs to intervene and pick up a child for a reason, she first tells the child she is going to pick them up, and then picks them up under their arms with her hands under the child’s armpits. Ms. Martinez reported that children line up on the rope and hold a ring when going outside and inside from the playground. If a child will not hold onto the ring/rope, she will sometimes hold them to go inside. Ms. Martinez indicated she first gives them a choice to hold the rope and walk in, or she will have to pick them up and hold them while they walk in because they are not being safe with their body.

Ms. Huerta has been employed with the center for approximately four months and works in Hale G classroom with the early Headstart children. Ms. Huerta denied yelling in children’s faces or yanking children by their arm or coats. She has never observed that kind of behavior from other staff either. Ms. Huerta reported that all staff are trained about appropriate care of children, positive interactions, tone of voice/speaking at children’s level, safe handling, conscious discipline/positive methods for behavior management, etc. These are regularly discussed and trained during staff meetings and was just trained in the end of October 2022. Ms. Huerta indicated the children line up on a rope with rings on it to go outside and inside. Staff take attendance and count children when leaving the classroom, again on the playground, when leaving the playground, and again when they return to the classroom. If a child is not willing to follow directions and line up on the rope when it is time to go inside from the playground, staff sometimes have to assist them by holding their hand and having the child stand with them or picking them up and carrying them inside. Ms. Huerta reported they were trained to tell the child if they are going to pick them up and explain why. They pick the child up under their arms.

Ms. Steinecke has been employed with the center for approximately nine years and works in Hale C classroom. She has not observed any child care staff yell in children’s faces or handle them inappropriately, nor has she ever done this herself. Ms. Steinecke indicated there are times on the playground where the staff do have to hold a child’s hand or pick them up, as the children often do not want to go inside from playing outdoors, and struggle with lining up to go inside, and may lay on the ground, or hide under equipment. At that point, staff may have to assist them in

getting to the line by picking them up under their arms and carrying them. Ms. Steinecke reported they are trained on the appropriate way to speak to children (tone of voice/body language), safe handling of children, positive methods for managing behaviors, etc.

On this same day I did review the center handbook, training slides for the child crisis plan, safe handling, physical touch and trauma, and behavior management. The October 27, 2022, training discussed trauma and how it affects children's behavior, and how child care staff talk to, and handle children, can be triggering. Child care staff must be cognizant of their tone of voice and body language, give the child direct language of the unwanted behavior and what behavior is wanted and give them a chance to respond before intervening. There were four steps identified, teach and promote, intervene and prevent, stop and ask for help, and physically assist to protect. When intervention is necessary, tell the child you are going to pick them up as to not alarm them or surprise them, and pick them up under their arms (armpits). The center handbook discusses the policy that staff actively supervise children at all times and observe children's behaviors to learn about them and guide them when needed.

On 01/12/2023 I spoke with Child A, Child B, and Child C's Mothers. I left voicemails for Child D and Child E's Mothers but did not receive a return phone call during this investigation.

Child A, Child B, and Child C's Mothers did not have concerns with the care and supervision of the children at the center. All three mothers have been in their children's classrooms before and observed the interactions between staff and children and reported that the child care staff are great with their children. Child A, Child B, and Child C's Mothers have not observed child care staff yelling in children's faces or yelling at the children in general and have not observed any staff yanking children by their arms or coats.

On 01/13/2023 I left a voice mail and emailed Complainant. I asked the Complainant if the allegations in the complaint were something they directly observed, and if so, I had a few questions, and would like a return call or email. On 01/16/2023 I received an email response from Complainant. Complainant reported that the information in the complaint was given to them and was not firsthand knowledge/direct observation. Complainant had not received any further complaints/concerns regarding the child care center.

APPLICABLE RULE	
R 400.8125	Staff; volunteer; requirements.
	(1) All staff and volunteers shall provide appropriate care and supervision of children at all times.

ANALYSIS:	<p>On 12/05/2022 I conducted an unannounced onsite inspection to Doris Hale Child Development Center. I observed child care staff interacting with children appropriately. I did not observe any staff yelling at children or yanking their arms/coat on the playground or in the classrooms. Staff provide appropriate care and supervision.</p> <p>The program director, licensee designee, co-director of education and children’s services, and child care staff were interviewed and denied that themselves or any other staff they had observed yelled at children or yanked them by the arms/coat at any time. They all discussed that they are trained regularly on appropriate care of children, safe handling, and managing children’s behaviors/discipline.</p> <p>The parents interviewed did not have concerns with the care and supervision of children at the center. All parents had been in their children’s classrooms and were familiar with the staff and observed them to be appropriate with children.</p> <p>Complainant did not directly observe children being yelled at or yanked by their arms/coat. The information was reported to Complainant, who reported it to Child Care Licensing.</p>
CONCLUSION:	VIOLATION NOT ESTABLISHED

APPLICABLE RULE	
R 400.8140	Discipline.
	(1) Positive methods of discipline that encourage self-control, self-direction, self-esteem, and cooperation must be used.
ANALYSIS:	Staff do not yell at children or yank them by their coats and arms. Staff uses positive methods of discipline.
CONCLUSION:	VIOLATION NOT ESTABLISHED

IV. RECOMMENDATION

I recommend no change in the license status of this child care center.

Roxanne Duckworth

01/24/2023

Roxanne Duckworth
Licensing Consultant

Date

Approved By:

Yolanda Sims

01/24/2023

Yolanda Sims
Area Manager

Date