



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS
LANSING

Marlon I. Brown, DPA
ACTING DIRECTOR

12/3/2023

St Johns Lutheran Church
603 McCleary St,
Dowagiac, MI, 49047

License Number: DC140018825
Special Investigation Number: SI-00078517

Dear St Johns Lutheran Church,

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

Rule/Law Number	Rule Description
R 400.8140(1)	Positive methods of discipline that encourage self-control, self-direction, self-esteem, and cooperation must be used.
R 400.8137(6)	Diapers and training pants must be checked frequently and changed when wet or soiled.

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

- I interviewed: Licensee designee, program director, child care staff members, and parents.
- I completed on-site inspections on the following dates: 10/20/2023

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 this report for accuracy and contact your consultant, Amy Steger at (269) 568-2915 or stegera@michigan.gov. In the event that Amy Steger is not available, and you need to speak to someone immediately, please contact the Child Care Licensing Bureau at 517-284-9730.

Sincerely,



Amy Steger, Licensing Consultant

Enclosure

**MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS
CHILD CARE LICENSING BUREAU**

Report Type: Special Investigation Report

Date of Report: 12/3/2023

Special Investigation Number	Complaint/Incident Receipt Date
SI-00078517	10/18/2023
Investigation Initiation Date	Report Due Date
10/20/2023	12/22/2023
License Number	Licensee Name(s)
DC140018825	St Johns Lutheran Church
Facility Name	Licensee Designee(s)
St John's Child Care & Learning Center	Lynn Marie Johnston
Program Type	Central Administrator(s)
Center	
Capacity	Program Director(s) Name
140	Lynn Marie Johnston Qualifications: Date PD Approved:
Facility Address	Mailing Address
603 Mccleary Street, Dowagiac, MI, 49047	603 Mccleary St, Dowagiac, MI, 49047
Facility Phone Number	Facility Email Address
2697823771	stjohnsdaycare@hotmail.com
Original License Issuance Date	License Status:
//	Regular
License Effective Date:	License Expiration Date:
7/18/2023	7/17/2025

ALLEGATION(S)

	Violation Established?
Child Care Staff Member 1 inappropriately disciplines Child A by taking away a blanket, allowing Child A to cry and beg for the blanket and their mother, and screaming and pointing a finger in Child A's face.	No
The child care staff members are not changing children's diapers until the end of the day when parents are picking up.	No

METHODOLOGY

Date	Activity
10/20/2023	Special Investigation Case Created SI-00078517
10/20/2023	Special Investigation Initiated via On-site

	Inspection completed onsite from 1:30 PM until 3:00 PM. Interviewed licensee designee and program director, Lynn Johnston, Child Care Staff Member (CCSM) 1, CCSM 2, and CCSM 3.
11/22/2023	Contact – Phone Call Made Telephone contact with Child A's Mother.
11/29/2023	Contact – Email Sent Email exchange with licensee designee and program director, Lynn Johnston.
11/30/2023	Contact – Phone Call Made Attempted telephone contact with Child D's Mother.
11/30/2023	Contact – Phone Call Made Attempted telephone contact with Child B's Mother.
11/30/2023	Contact – Phone Call Made Attempted telephone contact with Child C's Father.
12/03/2023	Exit Conference Email sent to licensee designee and program director, Lynn Johnston.

ALLEGATION: Child Care Staff Member 1 inappropriately disciplines Child A by taking away a blanket, allowing Child A to cry and beg for the blanket and their mother, and screaming and pointing a finger in Child A's face.

INVESTIGATION:

I conducted an unannounced onsite inspection at the center on 10/20/2023. I advised licensee designee and program director, Lynn Johnston, of the allegations. She has not received any complaints regarding Child Care Staff Member (CCSM) 1. There was a former CCSM that was “nasty” to children, but she no longer works at the center. I asked about the CCSM and was told it was CCSM 4. Lynn Johnston said she noticed her tone in the classroom, and it was “gruff.” She never got to address it with CCSM 4 who ended up walking out. CCSM 4 worked at the center for approximately three months. She reminded CCSM 4 that they are little children.

There is one child that has had issues with crying and screaming about doing things she does not want to do such as sleeping. There has been a couple times a blanket has caused issues and was taken away because the child was swinging it around. I asked if it was the only blanket the child had. Lynn Johnston said there is a second blanket on the cot that goes under and over the blanket.

I asked Lynn Johnston to describe the interactions with children. She advised that CCSM 1 loves the kids and helps them make good decisions. CCSM 1 does a lot of fun stuff with the children. I asked what discipline methods are used. Lynn Johnston indicated that redirecting is used and removing them from the situation. She denied they use time out. I requested the discipline policy and child information cards. Lynn

Johnston said the discipline policy is in the parent handbook and would get a copy for review along with children's information.

While onsite on 10/20/2023, I interviewed CCSM 1, CCSM 2, and CCSM 3. CCSM 1 said that there is one incident where a blanket was taken away from Child A. Child A was playing with the blanket and would not go to sleep. She was told three times not to mess around and it was hitting CCSM 1. The fourth time the blanket hit her, she took it away. Child A had been laying on her side waving the blanket around. She was told to lay down and if she did it again, the blanket would be taken away. There is a blanket on the cot like a sleeping bag, this was an additional blanket. When Child A calmed down, they gave her back the blanket and she fell asleep.

CCSM 1 denied there were any other incidents. She has never observed anyone screaming or getting in a child's face. They get down on the child's level to talk to them. Parents have not expressed any concerns and usually give them a lot of compliments. The parents are advised that if there are any concerns, to talk to them, call, or stop by the center. They want an open and honest communication with parents.

I asked what discipline methods are used at the center. CCSM 1 said they use redirection. If children are fighting over toys, they try to direct them to other toys to play with or they have had to separate some of the equipment such as the kitchen as it is very popular. They do not use time out. If the behavior is excessive or concerning or there is a risk of harm, they will remove the child from the area and sit with them at the table. She is not really familiar with the center's discipline policy. She has just gone by what she was told and has seen other CCSMs do.

CCSM 2 said that she provides coverage in CCSM 1's classroom. She has observed Child A swinging her blanket around the room. The blanket may hit another child, so they try to keep her separated. Several CCSMs have told Child A if she cannot quit swinging the blanket around when she lays down, they will take it. CCSM 2 has observed this occur between one and seven times over a period of a couple months. It used to be a daily occurrence. Now Child A will get on her cot, and they might have to tell her a couple times to lay down and then she falls asleep.

I asked CCSM 2 about discipline methods used with children. She advised the children may have to go to another activity. CCSMs redirect the children. They will remove them and have them sit at a table with a basket of books or puzzles. She denied the use of time out. CCSM 2 denied having any concerns regarding CCSM 1 and thinks she is a wonderful child care staff member. CCSM 1 really cares for the children. She denied having concerns about any of the CCSMs.

CCSM 3 said there was a former CCSM that used to scream at the children, but they no longer work for the center. She identified that staff member as CCSM 4. CCSM 3 denied that CCSM 1 screams at children. There is one child that has some behavioral issues in the classroom. Child A has two blankets, one is like a sleeping bag and then there is a separate blanket she brings. Child A will swing that blanket around and hit

the CCSMs with it. CCSM 3 said she has been hit with the blanket and it hurts. Child A sucks on the end of the blanket and twists it up and then hits with that end. The blanket is not taken away right away but is after she is asked repeatedly. Child A is asked to keep the blanket to herself. Child A has been told if she cannot sit down with her blanket, they will keep it until she can calm down. Child A will cry for a minute and then they say, "what do you need to do" and she calms down and gets the blanket back and then lay with it.

CCSM 3 advised this only happens once in a while. Not every day but every now and again, Child A will be in a mood and does not want to do what they are asking her to do. CCSM 3 has never heard Child A scream for her mom and just says "I want my blankie." She is told "you have one and will get the other when you calm down." CCSM 3 estimated this occurs about twice per week. When they talk to Child A's Mother, she will say Child A didn't sleep well and she knew it was going to be a rough day. This occurs less and less. Child A has come a long way, she used to not lay down or listen and now she understands there are consequences.

I asked CCSM 3 about the discipline methods used with children. She advised they use a quiet center when children are having a hard time. They will offer other options such as getting other toys and offering options. If the children are having a meltdown, they are removed from the area and redirected. They always make sure that no one is hurt. They try to take the children to another area to find out what is going on then do a quieter activity such as books and puzzles until they are calmed down. Then they ask the children if they are ready to play with friends or if they want to stay at the table.

CCSM 3 denied seeing any inappropriate discipline techniques used at the center. Sometimes a CCSM will raise their voice, but they check each other because sometimes there are some stressful days, and the children have behavioral issues. They say let's tone it down and take a break. They can call the director if needed and she can relieve them for a couple minutes to calm down.

I reviewed the center's discipline policy. It states, "The following positive discipline techniques will be used to minimize the need for discipline: 1. Focus on positive behaviors, 2. Giving children choices, 3. Building self-confidence by letting the child do what they are able to do. When discipline is necessary (such as with biting, bullying, aggressiveness and extreme disrespect), the following age appropriate methods will be used: redirecting the child to another area and speaking to him/her about the behavior and the consequences caused by said behavior; suggest how to handle it in a Christian manner in the future and explain what the consequences will be if it continues; they will apologize to all involved; if the behavior continues after the second warning, an incident report will be written up, and the director will speak to the child. The parents will be informed of the incident when picking up the child; if the behavior continues, the parents will be immediately notified. A suspension and/or termination from the program may occur. At no time will corporal/physical punishment be used including: hitting, spanking, shaking, screaming, biting, restricting movement by binding or tying, isolating in a closed area, humiliating, depriving a child of food, rest, or toilet use, or excluding a child

from outdoor/gross motor play or daily learning experiences. During or after any disciplinary action, the teacher will remind the child of God's commandments and of his forgiveness through Jesus Christ. The teacher will convey to the child both verbally and non-verbally that she disapproves of the action, not the child himself.

On 11/22/2023, I spoke with Child A's Mother over the telephone. She advised that CCSM 1 is the lead. Child A has mentioned that CCSM 1 takes her blanket away. She asked Child A if she was being naughty with the blanket. She said she assumes Child A is swinging it around and has gotten it taken away. Child A's Mother advised it is a comfort blanket and not the only one Child A has during rest time, as there is a blanket sleeper with a built-in pillow. Child A's Mother does not personally like the practice because it is Child A's comfort and if they are trying to get her to go to sleep, why take her comfort item away. She is not sure if they are trying other discipline methods before taking the blanket away.

Child A's Mother denied witnessing any finger pointing or screaming at children. They try to keep an open communication. She asks Child A if her CCSMs are nice. Sometimes Child A will say she was naughty today and got in trouble. Child A has said that CCSM 1 and CCSM 3 yell at her. Child A's Mother said she assumes Child A is being disruptive in those instances as Child A can sometimes be "dramatic." Child A seems to like CCSM 1 quite a bit. Child A's Mother has not observed any inappropriate discipline occur. She did say that some of the CCSMs have a hard time talking to children and maybe are not engaging at an age-appropriate level and treat them like they are older children.

I had an email exchange with Lynn Johnston on 11/29/2023. She was out of the center and would contact me when she was back.

On 11/30/2023, I attempted telephone contact with Child B's Mother, Child C's Father, and Child D's Mother. I have not spoken to them as of the writing of this report.

On 12/03/2023, I sent an email to conduct an exit conference.

RULE/STATUTORY VIOLATIONS:

APPLICABLE RULES	
R 400.8140(1)	Positive methods of discipline that encourage self-control, self-direction, self-esteem, and cooperation must be used.
ANALYSIS:	The child care staff members are using positive methods of discipline. A comfort blanket has been taken away from Child A after warnings, but it was not their only blanket.
CONCLUSION:	VIOLATION NOT ESTABLISHED

ALLEGATION: The child care staff members are not changing children's diapers until the end of the day when parents are picking up.

INVESTIGATION:

During the onsite inspection on 10/20/2023, I interviewed Lynn Johnston, CCSM 1, CCSM 2, and CCSM 3.

Lynn Johnston said that to her knowledge, the CCSMs in the Big Room where CCSM 1 works are checking and changing children when necessary. She has no reason to believe they are not diapering children when needed.

CCSM 1 advised that diapering is checked and done every two hours. There are only two children that are diapered. Those two children get checked and changed every two hours and at the end of her shift. The children are diapered in the bathroom. At the end of the day, the classrooms are combined due to lower numbers of children and staffing. She is not sure who changes their diapers after she leaves for the day. I asked what time she leaves, and she advised it depends but not before 4:00 PM.

CCSM 2 was not sure about diapering. She is not responsible for diapering children. She was at lunch today and heard CCSM 1 checking and changing a diaper. She knows they are being checked and changed but she does not know how frequently. She has not known there to be any issues with diapering.

I asked CCSM 2 if she works at the center after CCSM 1 leaves during after-school programming. The children combine into one room until the center closes at 6:00 PM. They typically do not diaper in the after-school program, but if one of the children that required diapering needed to be diapered, they would change them. I asked where and how they would change the diapers. CCSM 2 said they would hopefully have enough CCSMs to stay compliant with ratio, but if not, then they would take a small group of children to the bathroom.

CCSM 3 said that CCSM 1 has a diapering schedule. CCSM 1 usually diapers around 9:00 AM and then again right before lunch. They try to make sure the children using the potty do not overlap with the children getting diapered. The children are checked and changed again after nap. CCSM 3 said she has helped with diaper changes at about 2:00 PM or 2:30 PM. There are a couple children that are in pull-ups that use the potty but are still checked just in case.


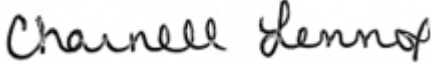
CCSM 3 said she works in all the classrooms and usually stays until the end of the day. At the end of the day, the center combines all the classrooms when there are approximately eight children in care. This usually happens about 5:00 PM sometimes at 4:30 PM but never before 4:30 PM. She said they never have to change a diaper, some children come in pull ups, but they use the potty. If a child needed to be diapered, they would take them to the bathroom and diaper in there.

I spoke with Child A's Mother on the telephone on 11/22/2023. She said Child A is not diapered so she is not sure of the diapering practices.

I attempted telephone contact with Child B's Mother, Child C's Father, and Child D's Mother. I have not spoken to them as of the writing of this report.

RULE/STATUTORY VIOLATIONS:

APPLICABLE RULES	
R 400.8137(6)	Diapers and training pants must be checked frequently and changed when wet or soiled.
ANALYSIS:	The child care staff members are regularly checking and changing diapers.
CONCLUSION:	VIOLATION NOT ESTABLISHED

Approved By:			
	12/03/2023		12/04/2023
Amy Steger Consultant	Date	Charnell Lennox Area Manager	Date