



STATE OF MICHIGAN
 DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS
 LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
 GOVERNOR

ORLENE HAWKS
 DIRECTOR

February 13, 2023

Christine Scott
 Adrian Public Schools
 340 E. Church Street
 Adrian, MI 49221

RE: License #: DC460389624
 Investigation #: 2023D0104004
 Adrian Head Start at Drager

Dear Ms. Scott:

I conducted a special investigation because the child care licensing bureau received information regarding your facility that related to licensing rules or law. The information was related to the following:

- R400.8125(1) Staff; volunteer; requirements.
- R4000.8140(2)(d) Discipline.

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

- I interviewed the person who made the complaint, program director, licensee, licensee designee, child care staff member, and parents.
- I completed on-site inspections on the following dates: 11/15/2022.

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. 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, appearing to read "Timothy A. Swope". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Timothy A Swope, Licensing Consultant
Child Care Licensing Bureau
611 W. Ottawa Street
P.O. Box 30664
Lansing, MI 48909
(517) 262-9838

enclosure

**MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS
CHILD CARE LICENSING BUREAU
SPECIAL INVESTIGATION REPORT**

I. IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

License #:	DC460389624
Investigation #:	2023D0104004
Complaint Receipt Date:	11/14/2022
Investigation Initiation Date:	11/15/2022
Report Due Date:	01/13/2023
Licensee Name:	Adrian Public Schools
Licensee Address:	340 E. Church Street Adrian, MI 49221
Licensee Telephone #:	(517) 263-2468
Administrator:	Christine Scott, Designee
Licensee Designee:	Christine Scott, Designee
Name of Facility:	Adrian Head Start at Drager
Facility Address:	340 E. Church Street Adrian, MI 49221
Facility Telephone #:	(517) 263-2468
Original Issuance Date:	11/28/2017
License Status:	REGULAR
Effective Date:	05/28/2022
Expiration Date:	05/27/2024
Capacity:	192
Program Type:	CHILD CARE CENTER

II. ALLEGATION(S)

	Violation Established?
On 11/9/22 Ms. Tongi Merillat, child care staff member yelled at the children and shoved an unknown female child.	No

III. METHODOLOGY

11/14/2022	Special Investigation Intake 2023D0104004
11/15/2022	Special Investigation Initiated - On Site Onsite from 10:00a.m. until 12:20p.m. Interview with Ms. Christine Scott, licensee designee, Ms. Tongi Merillat, Ms. Sarah Suydam, and Ms. Katherine Mills, child care staff members. Observation of center premises and outdoor play area.
11/15/2022	Comment – Reviewed camera video footage of 11/9/22 when preschool classroom transitioned from the classroom to playground.
02/01/2023	Contact – Telephone interview with Child A & B's Mother.
02/01/2023	Contact - Attempted telephone interview with Child C's Mother - left message.
02/01/2023	Contact - Telephone interview with Child D's Mother.
02/01/2023	Exit Conference exit conference with Ms. Scott, licensee designee.
02/01/2023	Special investigation – full compliance

ALLEGATION: On 11/9/22 Ms. Tongi Merillat, child care staff member yelled at the children and shoved an unknown female child.

INVESTIGATION: On 11/9/22, I reviewed an incident report submitted to the department from the center. According to the incident report, on 11/9/22 at approximately 1:00p.m., Ms. Tangi Merillat, child care staff member could be heard yelling at the child care children and was observed shoving an unknown female child during transition time from the second to first floor, to the vestibule. Ms. Christine

Scott, licensee designee, reviewed the cameras video footage and spoke with the child care staff members working in the classroom. There was nothing that came of concern from reviewing the video footage and speaking with the child care staff members.

On 11/15/22, I conducted an unannounced onsite inspection to the center and interviewed Ms. Christine Scott, licensee designee, regarding the allegation. Ms. Scott said the center was made aware of the allegation on 11/9/22. After reviewing the camera video footage and speaking with the child care staff members working in the classroom, Ms. Scott said she did not see an incident where Ms. Merillat yelled at any children or shove a child. Ms. Scott said that Ms. Merillat has been employed at the center for three years and no previous discipline issues involving her ability to provide the children with optimum care and supervision. She also recently completed a training on working with children during busy transition times. On the day of the alleged incident, Ms. Scott was located in the office area adjacent to the vestibule where the alleged incident occurred. Ms. Scott said Ms. Merillat has a loud tone to her voice when speaking and at no time, did she hear anything that was concerning when Ms. Merillat was taking the children outdoors for playtime. Ms. Scott said in the video footage, she can be seen standing at the corner of the desk when the children were entering the vestibule area. At no time did Ms. Scott turnaround from hearing Ms. Merillat yell or shove any child care child as she was aware of Ms. Merrillat's loud speaking tone in her voice. Ms. Scott and I reviewed two separate camera video footages from 11/9/22 around 1:00p.m. Ms. Merillat and Ms. Sarah Suydam, child care staff member, were present. While observing the video footages, I observed both Ms. Merillat and Ms. Suydam leave the classroom with their children, walk down the hallway to the stairwell, walk down the stairway to the first floor, then open the doorway to enter the vestibule leading to the outdoor play area located on the eastside of the center. During the transition walk time, Ms. Suydam was in front of the line while Ms. Merillat walked at the back of the line. There was no time during the transition time did I observe Ms. Merillat shove a child. When the children first entered the vestibule area located at the entrance of the center, I observed Ms. Merillat place her hand onto Child A's (age 4 years female) shoulder to reposition her in line. It did not appear as Ms. Merillat was yelling at Child A and Child A was smiling in the video footage and walked next to Ms. Merillat as they exited the center. Ms. Scott said if anyone was being yelled at, she would have heard it in the adjacent office located next to the vestibule area as she was standing over the counter area in the video and did not even look backwards toward the children as they transitioned to the outdoor play area. Ms. Scott identified the two female children who were present in the video footage Child A (age 4 years, female) and Child B (age 3 years female); neither child displayed any signs of being upset during the transition time nor did they exhibit any hear or hesitation toward Ms. Merillat as Child A held Ms. Merrillat's hand and was smiling as they walked outside of the center. Ms. Scott informed me that Child A has a non-diagnosed hearing impairment. When she is being spoken to, the child care staff members have to speak loudly and repeatedly toward her at face level in order to acknowledge that she hears them.

On 11/15/22, I interviewed Ms. Tongi Merillat, child care staff member at the center. Ms. Merillat informed me that she has been working as a lead preschool caregiver at the center for the last four years and loves her job. I informed Ms. Merillat of the allegation. Ms. Merillat denied the allegation stating that she would never yell or shove any child. She acknowledged her and Ms. Suydam transitioning the children from the classroom to outdoor play around 10:00a.m. Ms. Merillat said during this time, she and Ms. Suydam assist the children with their outdoor gear. After they are ready, she and Ms. Suydam have the children line up, they complete a head count and walk down the hallway to the stairwell, where they use the stairway to go to the first-floor vestibule to exit the center and walk to the outdoor play area. During the transition time, Ms. Merillat said a child care staff member is positioned in both the front and rear of the line of children. Ms. Merillat said her current classroom has a lot of first-time students present which require a lot of patience and clear and concise direction from the child care staff members. In addition, Ms. Merillat said they have three children who are hearing and speech impaired including Child A and Child B. Ms. Merillat described herself as "loud toned" and said when she speaks to the hearing-impaired children, she gets down to their level, face to face, and speaks loudly to them with clear and concise direction in order to assure they comprehend what she is saying. On occasions when she speaks with Child A, she also places her hands onto Child A's shoulders while speaking with her. During transition time for outdoor play, Ms. Merillat said the children get excited and have to be consistently reminded of the classroom rules when transitioning which include walking in line, being quiet, and staying with the child care staff members until they reach the gated play area outdoors. Ms. Merillat said when the children reach the vestibule, a lot of children become excited and try to go through the doorway at once. Ms. Merillat said when this happens, she reminds the children of the rules of remaining in line and places her hand onto their shoulder to guide them back into the line. Ms. Merillat explained that this is what she did with Child A on 11/9/22. Ms. Merillat said Child A was in good spirits the entire time and held her hand as they walked outside of the center. Ms. Merillat again denied yelling or shoving any child while transitioning outdoors.

On 11/15/22, I interviewed Ms. Sarah Suydam, child care staff member at the center. Ms. Suydam informed me that she has been working as child care staff member at the center for the last four years and loves her job. I informed Ms. Suydam of the allegation. Ms. Suydam confirmed working in the preschool classroom on 11/9/22 with Ms. Merillat. Ms. Suydam denied seeing Ms. Merillat yell or shove any child in care while they were transitioning from the classroom to outdoor play. She confirmed the children getting excited for outdoor play and tend to run towards the doorway leading to the vestibule, bench area as they get ready to exit the center to go outside. During this time, Ms. Suydam said she and Ms. Merillat remind the children of the classroom rules to stay in line. In addition, they may place their hand onto the children to guide them back into the line. Ms. Suydam reiterated that she did not see Ms. Merillat yell or shove any child in care, to include Child A. Ms. Suydam said she has worked with Ms. Merillat for over a year time and she is

always patient and appropriate when interacting with the children. Ms. Suydam confirmed Ms. Scott's statement regarding Ms. Merillat having a loud voice that carries when she talks aloud. She also confirmed there being children enrolled in care that are hearing impaired therefore requiring you to speak loudly and speaking with them at their level that includes Child A and Child B.

On 11/15/22, I interviewed Ms. Katherine Mills, child care staff member at the center. Ms. Mills informed me that she has been working as child care staff member at the center for the last year and loves working with the children. Ms. Mills works in the preschool classroom with Ms. Merillat. I informed her of the allegation. Ms. Mills wasn't working on 11/9/22 but informed me that she has worked with Ms. Merillat for over one year's time. She denied ever seeing Ms. Merillat yell or shove any child care children and described Ms. Merillat as an "awesome teacher who works great with the children." Ms. Mills said all the children adore Ms. Merillat and look forward to interacting with her each day. Ms. Mills confirmed Ms. Merillat's statement regarding transition times being challenging for the child care staff members as they have a lot of first time students enrolled in their classroom. She said a lot of the children are now beginning to become accustomed to the classroom rules therefore making transition times run smoother. When transitioning to outdoor play, Ms. Mills acknowledged the child care staff members assisting the children with their coats and boots, having them line up and taking a head count of the children before they begin the transition to walk outside. Ms. Mills also acknowledged a child care staff member being positioned in the front and rear of the line of children. With their classroom being located on the upper level of the building, Ms. Mills said that the children will walk down the hallway to the stairwell and take the stairs to the main level vestibule and then exit the center from the vestibule to the gated outdoor play area. According to Ms. Mills, when the children reach the vestibule area, they tend to step out of line to try and be the first one through the vestibule door. At this time, the child care staff member reminds the children of the classroom rules and guide them back into line. She also confirmed some of their children being hearing impaired therefore when the child care staff members speak with them, they will have to speak loudly and go to their level, almost face to face, in order to assure they are hearing what you are telling them. Ms. Mills confirmed Child A and Child B being two of the children with hearing impairments. They also have another child who is nonverbal and gets easily frustrated and has tantrums. When they interact with him during transition times, one child care staff member walks with him while holding his hand.

On 2/1/23, I separately interviewed Child A & B's Mother, Child C's Mother and Child D's Mother via telephone. None of the parents expressed any concerns regarding the care and supervision the center provides to their children each day. Child A & B's Mother confirmed Child A being hearing impaired and Child B being speech delayed. Child A & B's Mother said all the child care staff members to include Ms. Merillat work great with the children and both Child A and Child B look forward to seeing the child care staff members each day. Child D's Mother said she has had two separate children attend care at the center over the past five years and cannot

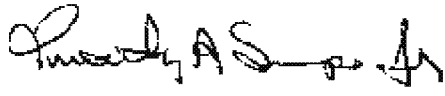
say enough about the professionalism of all the child care staff members exhibited when interacting with her and her children. Child D (age 3 ½ years, male) was nonverbal when he first enrolled into the head start program. Since being enrolled in the program, he is now able to talk with his peers and child care staff members. In addition, the child care staff members have also worked with him on becoming self-sufficient in his potty training. Child D's Mother said she would highly recommend this program to anyone. All the parents said the child care staff members communicate with them on a daily basis regarding their child's experiences while in care.

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:	The center provides the children with appropriate care and supervision. Ms. Merillat did not shove any child in care; on occasions when the children are transitioning, the child care staff members place their hands on a child to redirect them into the walking line. In addition, when speaking with the non-diagnosed hearing-impaired children, the child care staff members speak to the children at face level and place their hands onto the child's shoulders to assure they are comprehending what is being said.
CONCLUSION:	VIOLATION NOT ESTABLISHED

APPLICABLE RULE	
R 400.8140	Discipline.
	(2) All of the following means of punishment are prohibited: (d) Inflicting mental or emotional punishment, such as humiliating, shaming, or threatening a child.
ANALYSIS:	The center uses positive methods of discipline with the children; they do not inflict mental or emotional punishment, such as shaming or threatening a child. Ms. Merillat was not yelling at the children but rather had to speak loudly to assure the non-diagnosed hearing-impaired child to hear her directions.
CONCLUSION:	VIOLATION NOT ESTABLISHED

IV. RECOMMENDATION

I recommend no change in the license status.

 02/08/2023

Timothy A Swope Date
Licensing Consultant

Approved By:

 02/13/2023

Darlese McConnell Date
Area Manager