



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
 DEPARTMENT OF  
 LIFELONG EDUCATION, ADVANCEMENT, AND POTENTIAL  
 LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER  
 GOVERNOR

MICHELLE RICHARD  
 ACTING DIRECTOR

1/16/2024

Christie Ann Sipila  
 St Paul Lutheran Church  
 202 E Fifth St,  
 Royal Oak, MI, 48067

License Number: DC630018063  
 Special Investigation Number: SI-00079752

Dear Ms. Sipila,

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 400.8125(1)	All staff and volunteers shall provide appropriate care and supervision of children at all times.
R 400.8182(3)(d)	Child Care Staff Member to Child Ratios for children ages 4 years old through school age is 1 to 12 with a maximum group size of 36.

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

- I interviewed: the program director, child care staff members, and parent(s).
- I completed on-site inspections on the following dates: 11/16/2023.

As a result of this investigation, I found the following violation(s):

Rule/Law Number	Rule Description
R 400.8125(1)	All staff and volunteers shall provide appropriate care and supervision of children at all times.
R 400.8182(3)(d)	Child Care Staff Member to Child Ratios for children ages 4 years old through school age is 1 to 12 with a maximum group size of 36.

Due to the violations, you must send us a [corrective action plan](#) by 01/28/2024. You can use our corrective action plan form or create your own. Even if you don't accept the provisional license, you must still send us an acceptable corrective action plan.

If you need help writing the corrective action plan, please contact licensing consultant, Michelle Fruehan at (248) 672-9158. If you do not send a corrective action plan, you may face disciplinary action. The corrective action plan must include the following:

- How compliance with each rule will be achieved.
- Who is directly responsible for implementing the corrective action for each violation.
- Specific time frames for each violation as to when the correction will be completed or implemented.
- How continuing compliance will be maintained once compliance is achieved.
- The signature of the responsible party and a date.

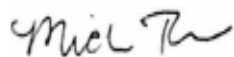
I recommend issuance of a 1st provisional license. If you accept the provisional license, you must sign and return the enclosed waiver form. If you do not accept the provisional license, the matter will be forwarded to the disciplinary unit.

<b>During this special investigation:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
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, Michelle Fruehan at (248) 672-9158 or email [fruehanm@Michigan.gov](mailto:fruehanm@Michigan.gov). In the event that Michelle Fruehan is not available and you need to speak to someone immediately, please contact the Child Care Licensing Bureau at 517-284-9730.

Sincerely,



Michelle Fruehan  
Licensing Consultant

**MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF LIFELONG EDUCATION, ADVANCEMENT AND  
POTENTIAL  
CHILD CARE LICENSING BUREAU**

**Report Type:** Special Investigation

**Date of Report:** 01/08/2024

<b>Special Investigation Number</b>	<b>Complaint/Incident Receipt Date</b>
SI-00079752	11/20/2023
<b>Investigation Initiation Date</b>	<b>Report Due Date</b>
11/20/2023	01/20/2024
<b>License Number</b>	<b>Licensee Name(s)</b>
DC630018063	St Paul Lutheran Church
<b>Facility Name</b>	<b>Licensee Designee(s)</b>
St Paul Lutheran School	Christie Ann Sipila
<b>Program Type</b>	<b>Central Administrator(s)</b>
Center	
<b>Capacity</b>	<b>Program Director(s) Name</b>
30	Christie Ann Sipila <b>Qualifications:</b> R 400.8113(7)(f) & (9) <b>Date PD Approved:</b> 10/19/2020
<b>Facility Address</b>	<b>Mailing Address</b>
508 Williams St, Royal Oak, MI, 48067	202 E Fifth St, Royal Oak, MI, 48067
<b>Facility Phone Number</b>	<b>Facility Email Address</b>
2485466555	csipila@stpaulroyaloak.org
<b>Original License Issuance Date</b>	<b>License Status:</b>
02/03/1982	Regular
<b>License Effective Date:</b>	<b>License Expiration Date:</b>
5/1/2023	4/30/2025

**ALLEGATION(S)**

	<b>Violation Established?</b>	
Child A was left unattended in the bathroom from approximately 8:30 am to 8:50 am while staff and the other children walked across the street to attend Chapel.	Yes	
Ms. Sipila was out of ratio from 8:15 AM to 8:30 AM.	Yes	

## METHODOLOGY

Date	Activity
11/16/2023	Special Investigation Initiated via On-site from 11:15 am to 12:30 pm. I interviewed Program Director Christie Sipila, Child Care Staff Member (CCSM) 1, CCSM 2, and CCSM 3.
11/16/2023	Contact – Document Received I received attendance records for the prekindergarten classroom.
11/20/2023	Special Investigation Case Created SI-00079752
11/16/2023	Exit Conference With Ms. Sipila
01/03/2023	Contact-Phone Call Made Spoke to Child A's Father.
1/11/2023	Exit Conference With Ms. Sipila

**ALLEGATION:** Child A was left unattended in the bathroom from approximately 8:30 am to 8:50 am while staff and the other children walked across the street to attend Chapel.

### INVESTIGATION:

On 11/14/2023, I received an incident report from Program Director, Christie Sipila. The incident report indicated that Child A was left unattended in the school bathroom. The incident occurred on 11/08/2023. I reminded Ms. Sipila that she is required to report incidents of children left unattended within 24 hours of the incident, and a written report is required within 72 hours of the incident.

On 11/16/2023, I completed an unannounced onsite inspection at St. Paul Lutheran School. I interviewed Program Director Christie Sipila. Ms. Sipila works as the lead staff for the 4- and 5-year-old classroom. Every Wednesday from 8:30 am to 9:00 am is chapel day for the entire school. During this time, the entire student body (including preschool children) and staff leave the school building and walk across the street to the church. St. Paul Lutheran Church is located at 202 E 5th St, in Royal Oak. St. Paul Lutheran School is located at 508 Williams St, Royal Oak, MI 48067. Ms. Sipila informed me that on the previous Wednesday, 11/8/2023, Child A was left unattended in the school while the rest of the school and staff attended Chapel across the street. She stated that Child A was left unattended in the school for about 20 minutes. Ms. Sipila works Monday through Friday from open to close. Children enter the building at 8:15 am, and Ms. Sipila walks her classroom from the drop off door to the classroom. Ms. Sipila took attendance at the drop off door. There were 13 children present. The

ratio for 4- and 5-year-old children is 1 staff to 12 children. Ms. Sipila walked children to the classroom and helped children hang up coats, change out of boots into shoes and use the bathroom in preparation of going to Chapel. The bathroom is located directly across the hall from the classroom. Children lined up to use the bathroom and Ms. Sipila provided supervision as children went in and out of the bathroom. At 8:25 am another child arrived, resulting in 14 children. Ms. Sipila recalled welcoming the child but did not sign him in on the attendance sheet. At 8:30 am Ms. Sipila requested her classroom children line up, and together as a group, they walked to the classroom next door, CCSM 2's room, with the idea that CCSM 1's class and CCSM 2's group would walk together across the street for safety and ratio reasons. CCSM 2 had 6 children in her class. CCSM 2's classroom children are 3 and 4 years old. Combined they have a total of 20 children, which meets ratio requirements when combined. Ms. Sipila did not count the number of children, rather she and CCSM 2 continued on with walking across the street.

Ms. Sipila and CCSM 2 sat children together in a pew and sat behind them. It was approximately 8:30 am when they were seated. Children sang songs and listened to the church message. At 8:48 am, Ms. Sipila noticed that Child A was not with the rest of her class. She said she jumped up and ran across the street. She called out for Child A and found her sitting in the bathroom stall, whimpering. Ms. Sipila asked her to come out and she did. She apologized to Child A. When they left the bathroom, the rest of the children were returning from chapel.

At 9:00 am CCSM 3 arrived. Ms. Sipila did not call Child A's Mother or Father. She talked to Child A's Father at pick up time, which was 3:10 pm. He told her that he was glad Child A was safe and was thankful to be notified of the incident. Child A's Father turned to Child A and stated, "Child A you cannot go to the bathroom without telling your teacher." Ms. Sipila told Child A's Father that Child A was doing fine after the incident and if she wasn't then she would have called him by phone to let him know about the incident.

Ms. Sipila said that CCSM 3 is scheduled to work from 8:30 am to 3:10 pm, however she comes in at 9:00 am on some days. She is allowed to come in at 9:00 am as needed, even though this leaves Ms. Sipila out of ratio. Ms. Sipila stated the board decides staff schedules. Ms. Sipila said she typically does a face to name list in her head; however, she did not do this on 11/16/2023. There was a lot of excitement amongst the children, and it distracted her from completing this step.

I interviewed CCSM 2. She recalled Ms. Sipila coming to her classroom around 8:30 am on 11/08/2023 and combining groups. She had 6 children in her group. Together they walked across the street and sat down in the chapel. CCSM 2 did not count Ms. Sipila's children or know that Child A was not present in the group. She managed her group and did not observe anything out of the ordinary.

I interviewed office assistant, CCSM 3. She was in her office in the far southwest corner of the building on 11/08/2023 from 8:30 am to 8:45 am. She was the only person in the building. The preschool classroom is located in the northeast corner of the building.

She was waiting for a child she thought would arrive late. However, at 8:45 am she left the building and walked over to the chapel. Before she walked out of the building, she heard a loud cry coming from the preschool hallway but didn't think much of it. She assumed there was a staff person with the crying child. She said she would have walked down the hallway to see the crying child but knew help would not be taken. CCSM 3 said she and Ms. Sipila do not have a good relationship, so she felt that she should not provide any sort of assistance to the crying child, as it would not be welcome. She left the building and returned sometime around 9:00 am.

On 01/03/2024, I spoke to Child A's Father. He stated that Ms. Sipila informed him of the incident when he picked up Child A around 3 pm on 11/08/2023. Child A's Father stated that Child A was testing her boundaries and has no concerns with the center, or the care provided by Ms. Sipila.

**RULE/STATUTORY VIOLATIONS:**

APPLICABLE RULES	
R 400.8125(1)	All staff and volunteers shall provide appropriate care and supervision of children at all times.
ANALYSIS:	Staff did not provide appropriate care and supervision of children at all times.  On 11/08/2023, Child A was left unattended by Ms. Sipila, when Child A was left in the bathroom while she, her classmates, the student body, and staff left the building to walk across the street to attend chapel. Child A was left unattended from 8:30 am to 8:50 am.  CCSM 3 remained in the building, however she did not provide care or supervision to Child A at any time.
CONCLUSION:	<b>Violation Established</b>

**ALLEGATION:** Ms. Sipila was out of ratio from 8:15 AM to 8:30 AM.

**INVESTIGATION:**

On 11/16/2023, Ms. Sipila cared for 14 children by herself. At 8:15 am there were 13 children in her care. By 8:25 am there were 14 children. A second staff member was scheduled to come in at 8:30 am; however, it is permissible by Ms. Sipila and the school board for a second staff member to come in at 9:00 am. At 8:30 am, Ms. Sipila joined CCSM 2's class, resulting in ratios being met. The required ratio for Ms. Sipila's classroom is 1 staff for every 12 children.

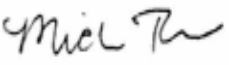
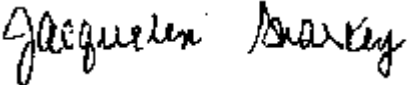
Ms. Sipila informed me that she is aware that ratios are not being met and has requested help from the school board but has not received it. She said she plans to attend the next school board meeting to hopefully address the staffing problem.

**RULE/STATUTORY VIOLATIONS:**

APPLICABLE RULES																									
400.8182(3)(d)	<p>(3) In each room or well-defined space, the maximum group size and ratio of child care staff members to children, including children related to a staff member or the licensee, must be as shown in Table 4:</p> <table border="1"> <caption>TABLE 4 Child Care Staff Member to Child Ratios</caption> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Age</th> <th>Child Care Staff Member to Child Ratio</th> <th>Maximum Group Size</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>(a)</td> <td>Infants and toddlers, birth until 30 months of age</td> <td>1 to 4</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(b)</td> <td>Preschoolers, 30 months of age until 3 years of age</td> <td>1 to 8</td> <td>16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(c)</td> <td>Preschoolers, 3 years of age until 4 years of age</td> <td>1 to 10</td> <td>30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(d)</td> <td>Preschoolers, 4 years of age until school-age</td> <td>1 to 12</td> <td>36</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(e)</td> <td>School-agers</td> <td>1 to 18</td> <td>36</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Age	Child Care Staff Member to Child Ratio	Maximum Group Size	(a)	Infants and toddlers, birth until 30 months of age	1 to 4	12	(b)	Preschoolers, 30 months of age until 3 years of age	1 to 8	16	(c)	Preschoolers, 3 years of age until 4 years of age	1 to 10	30	(d)	Preschoolers, 4 years of age until school-age	1 to 12	36	(e)	School-agers	1 to 18	36
	Age	Child Care Staff Member to Child Ratio	Maximum Group Size																						
(a)	Infants and toddlers, birth until 30 months of age	1 to 4	12																						
(b)	Preschoolers, 30 months of age until 3 years of age	1 to 8	16																						
(c)	Preschoolers, 3 years of age until 4 years of age	1 to 10	30																						
(d)	Preschoolers, 4 years of age until school-age	1 to 12	36																						
(e)	School-agers	1 to 18	36																						
ANALYSIS:	On 11/16/2023, Child care staff members to child ratios were not met. Ms. Sipila cared for more than 12 children by herself from 8:15 am to 8:30 am.																								
CONCLUSION:	<b>Violation Established</b>																								

**BUREAU RECOMMENDATION**

Bureau Recommendation
Upon receipt of an acceptable corrective action plan, I recommend the issuance of a 1st provisional license.

Approved By:	
	1/11/2024
Michelle Fruehan Consultant	Date
	1/16/2024
Jacquelin Sharkey Area Manager	Date