



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS
LANSING

ORLENE HAWKS
DIRECTOR

June 27, 2023

Toni Schiedel
50711 Burlington
Marcellus, MI 49067

RE: License #: DC750379066
Investigation #: 2023D0216014
Country Kids Park

Dear Toni Schiedel:

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

R 400.8140(1) Discipline.

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

- I interviewed the person who made the complaint, the program director, the licensee, child care staff members, and parents, with relevant information.
- I completed an on-site inspection on the following date: June 27, 2023.

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

R 400.8140(1) Discipline.

Due to the violations, you must send us a corrective action plan by July 18, 2023. You can use our [corrective action plan](#) form or create your own. If you need help writing the corrective action plan, please contact me. 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.

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](#).

Sincerely,

Carrie Harris

Carrie Harris, Licensing Consultant
 Child Care Licensing Bureau
 611 W. Ottawa Street
 PO Box 30837
 Lansing, MI 48909
 (269) 615-5617

enclosure

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

I. IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

License #:	DC750379066
Investigation #:	2023D0216014
Complaint Receipt Date:	06/26/2023
Investigation Initiation Date:	06/26/2023
Report Due Date:	08/25/2023
Licensee Name:	Toni Schiedel
Licensee Address:	50711 Burlington Marcellus, MI 49067
Licensee Telephone #:	(269) 278-6300
Administrator:	N/A
Licensee Designee:	N/A
Name of Facility:	Country Kids Park
Facility Address:	53806 Wilbur Road Three Rivers, MI 49093
Facility Telephone #:	(269) 279-1143
Original Issuance Date:	08/31/2015
License Status:	REGULAR
Effective Date:	03/01/2022
Expiration Date:	02/29/2024
Capacity:	100
Program Type:	CHILD CARE CENTER

II. ALLEGATION(S)

	Violation Established?
Children in care are made to run laps outside in the heat as punishment for behavior. They are also made to write sentences.	Yes
Additional Findings	No

III. METHODOLOGY

06/26/2023	Special Investigation Intake 2023D0216014
06/26/2023	Special Investigation Initiated – Telephone from 1:55 PM-2:05 PM Spoke to Complainant
06/26/2023	Inspection Completed On-site from 2:45 PM-4:00 PM Spoke to Program Director, Joy Wegner, Child Care Staff Member 1, and Child Care Staff Member 2
06/27/2023	Contact – Telephone call made Spoke to Licensee, Toni Schiedel
06/27/2023	Contact – Document Received Discipline policy
06/27/2023	Contact – Telephone call made Spoke to Child A’s Mother, Child B’s Mother, Child C’s Mother, and Child D & E’s Father; A voicemail message was left for Child F’s Mother
06/27/2023	Exit Conference Spoke with Licensee, Toni Schiedel

ALLEGATION: Children in care are made to run laps outside in the heat as punishment for behavior. They are also made to write sentences.

INVESTIGATION: On June 26, 2023, I spoke to the Complainant by telephone who said that Program Director, Joy Wegner, forces children to run laps around the playground for misbehavior. The Complainant was concerned because the temperature outside has been very hot, and she felt it was inappropriate to require children to do physical activities like running for discipline. She said children have been forced to run as a form of discipline “on multiple occasions.” She said children have also had to write sentences for misbehavior and the complainant was concerned because she felt that was not a positive form of discipline for children.

On June 26, 2023, I made an onsite inspection to the child care center and spoke to Ms. Wegner, Child Care Staff Member 1 (CCSM 1), and Child Care Staff Member 2 (CCSM 2) about the allegation. Ms. Wegner acknowledged that she has made children in care run laps around the playground for misbehavior but said it is never more than one lap and it has always been at their own pace. She may tell them to “hurry up and get it done” but she said she never pushes them to do it at any particular speed. Ms. Wegner stated that when she has children run a lap it is because they usually have “pent up energy”, and it gives the children a way to express that energy in a healthy way instead of utilizing a time-out. She said she watches the heat index closely and she will not have children go outside and run if the weather is not safe. There have been a few times when she has had all of the children in care run a lap around the playground or the gymnasium before playing a game or choosing an activity. Some of the more active boys will have to run laps for throwing water bottles up to hit ceiling tiles in the cafeteria, jumping off the outdoor climber, or hanging from the basketball rim because “they know better” and have had multiple warnings about that behavior and just need to “burn off the excess energy.” Ms. Wegner stated that the parents she has spoken to support the practice and have not expressed any concerns about it.

Ms. Wegner said she cannot even remember the last time she has made any children in care write sentences as a form of discipline. She said it was probably before Christmas 2022. Even then, it was age-appropriate, and the child did not write more than what fit on one side of sheet of notebook paper. She admitted that she has “threatened” children by asking them if they “want to write sentences” but she has not followed through on it and that is usually enough that they comply with her requests.

CCSM 1 stated that she has been employed at the center for less than a year but acknowledged that Ms. Wegner has made children in care run as a form of discipline, but she said it has never been more than two or three laps around the playground and never when it was too hot outside. She said when children have had to run laps, it is always completed at their own pace and some even walk. The only time Ms. Wegner has told a child to “pick up the pace” is when they are almost finished with their lap so they can get back to other activities outside. CCSM 1 said

she feels running a lap is a better way to expend excess energy than sitting in a time-out because it allows the child to move and get their body back in control.

CCSM 1 said she has only ever seen or heard about one child needing to write sentences since she has been employed at the center and that was November or December 2022. She said the child was being “very rude” and had to write sentences for about ten minutes. The child only filled one side of a sheet of paper and had to repeat back what she had written to Ms. Wegner before she got up to play. CCSM 1 said Ms. Wegner will use writing sentences or running as a threat but only after she has given many opportunities for the child to stop the undesired behavior and Ms. Wegner rarely needs to follow through with the threat because the children will comply with her request.

CCSM 2 stated that she has only been employed at the center for one month but acknowledged that Ms. Wegner has made school-age children whose misbehavior has been addressed many times, run one or two laps around the playground as a consequence for not listening. She said this only occurs after Ms. Wegner has given the child “tons of warnings” and they are “repeat offenders” and “know better.” The children do have to run the lap, but they do not need to do it fast, and it is not timed. She said most of the children would rather do that than have to sit next to her in a time-out. CCSM 2 said Ms. Wegner watches the weather closely every day and if it is above a certain temperature, the children do not go outdoors. If it is too hot, the child may have to run their lap the next morning instead when they go outside to play.

CCSM 2 said she has heard Ms. Wegner threaten children and tell them that if their misbehavior continues, they will have to write sentences, but she has not ever seen a child write sentences.

On June 26, 2023, I explained to Ms. Wegner that making children run laps or write sentences was not a positive method of discipline because it did not promote self-control, self-direction, self-esteem, and cooperation. I told her that in some states, it can be considered a form of corporal punishment to force children to engage in physical exercise as a form of punishment. I explained that it is more effective to implement logical and natural consequences in situations where a child misbehaves. If a child is forced to run or write, they may grow to hate exercise or writing, which is not the intended outcome of discipline and does not help them develop self-control.

On June 27, 2023, I spoke to Licensee, Toni Schiedel, about the allegation. She said that she had spoken with Ms. Wegner about the allegation and understood that the department did not consider it an appropriate positive method of discipline to have children run laps or write sentences while in care. She said Ms. Wegner has never forced any children to run laps in excessive heat and it was only used as one of many methods to help active children get rid of excess energy and calm down. If someone had a concern about it and brought it to her attention, she would have immediately discontinued the practice and found other alternatives.

Ms. Schiedel immediately sent me a copy of the center's discipline policy which states that to maintain a safe environment that helps children develop effective social behaviors, they have established two rules: Follow directions and respect others and their belongings. She said to help children learn these practices, they offer individual attention, arrangements of liberal success, praise, and most importantly, modeling the desired behavior. When children are unable to follow the rules, and have a problem gaining control over their actions, they talk with the child at their level and redirect the behavior. If children need additional control in managing their behavior, the child will be moved directly next to the teacher and reminded of the appropriate behavior. If it continues, the child will be moved outside the group, participation is still expected, and the child is again reminded of the rule. If it still continues, the child care staff member will discuss with the child the importance of the rule and why it must be followed. If the child has success in following the rule, the staff will praise the child for the acceptable behavior. If it continues, then the child will be moved to "time-out" away from the group and must sit quietly for a few minutes to regain control. It will only last as long as it takes for the child to calm down or one minute per year of their age, whichever is less. The teacher will have the child identify the rule broken and assure the child understands why it is a problem. The written policy states that Country Kids Park would never humiliate, frighten, or strike a child. Similarly, they would never deprive a child of meals, rest, or toilet use. The prohibited methods of punishment would not be used even if the parents gave permission.

On June 27, 2023, I spoke to Child A's Mother, Child B's Mother, Child C's Mother, and Child D & E's Father about the allegation. Child A's Mother said Child A has been attending the center for three summers. She stated that the center's approach to discipline is that if a child has a problem, they need to bring it to the child care staff member's attention and they will address the behavior with the offending child or talk to the child's parent about it. If the behavior continues the child may have to sit in a time-out on a bench, by the wall, or at a table, depending on where they are. Child A's Mother said Child A would tell her if there was any inappropriate discipline happening at the child care facility. Child A's Mother said they love the child care center and the child care staff members are "super communicative" with her and she does not have any concerns about the center.

Child B's Mother said Child B has been attending the center four years. She was told by another parent of a child in care that the child care staff members make children run laps for misbehavior but she asked Child B and he said he has never had to run as punishment. She has not had any concerns about the facility.

Child C's Mother said Child C has been attending the center for over four years and they absolutely love the facility and have not had any concerns. She said Child C is a very active child and she encourages running laps at home when Child C is misbehaving to help him learn self-regulation. She is aware the center has also used this method of discipline with Child C, but she has never had any concerns

about it and said Child C chooses to run over other forms of discipline. She said the child care staff members are “fantastic.”

Child D & E’s Father said Child D and Child E have been attending for over four years. He said Child D is a very active child and was aware that the center uses writing sentences as a form of discipline because he suggested it to them and uses that at home. He said it helps Child D calm down. He was not sure what other methods of discipline were used in the center. He said he has always had a good relationship with the center and thinks they are “amazing.”

On June 27, 2023, a voicemail message was left for Child F’s Mother, but it was not returned.

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:	The center did not use positive methods of discipline that encourage self-control, self-direction, self-esteem, and cooperation. Ms. Wegner admitted that she had children run laps or write sentences as a form of punishment.
CONCLUSION:	VIOLATION ESTABLISHED

IV. RECOMMENDATION

Upon receipt of an acceptable written corrective action plan, I recommend no change in the status of the license.

Carrie Harris

June 27, 2023

Carrie Harris
Licensing Consultant

Date

Approved By:

Yolanda Sims

June 27, 2023

Yolanda Sims
Area Manager

Date