

Department for Children and Families
Child Development Division

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Agency of Human Services

<http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd>

October 10, 2025

Sycamore Tree Child Care Center LLC
PO Box 6077
Rutland, VT 05702

Center Based Child Care and Preschool
Certificate # 85394

Licensing Report

Regulations require posting this report for 15 days in an area easily visible to parents
or until the parent of each child enrolled has initialed this form.

Your program was visited on 10/08/2025 and again on 10/09/2025 by Jessica Stannard, Licensing Field Specialist, following concerns being reported to the Division. Initial findings were discussed via phone with Tom Tench on 10/10/2025.

33 V.S.A § 151 (7) states that "Whenever the Department determines that a licensed child care facility or registered family child care home has violated a health or safety rule, the facility or home shall post the Department's notice of violation in a conspicuous place in the facility or home. In the case of a serious violation, as defined by the Department by rule, the facility or home shall also notify by mail a person responsible for the welfare of each child attending the facility or home. A serious violation shall include violation of group size and staffing requirements and any violation involving a situation which immediately imperils the health, safety, or well-being of persons in the care of the licensee or registrant."

A serious violation has been cited and a copy of this Licensing Report shall be mailed to the parent(s) or guardians of each child currently enrolled no later than 10/17/2025.

The program was found to be in violation of the following regulation(s):

Reg. No.: 3.2.5



Self-reported violations: If an incident or situation occurs in a CBCCPP while children are present that could be considered a serious violation as defined in the rule 2.2.50 of these regulations, the licensee has a responsibility to self-report this to the Division within twenty-four (24) hours of the incident. A complete report will include a description of the incident, what the licensee has done to verify the particulars of what occurred, and how the licensee has taken corrective action to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to prevent a future serious violation. If such a report is received in a timely manner from a licensee with a history of consistent regulatory compliance, no child has been seriously injured or harmed as a result of the incident or situation, and the licensee has taken prompt and appropriate corrective action; the Division may, on a case by case basis and at the Division's discretion, elect to issue a warning, rather than a violation related to that incident or situation.

The factual basis for the violation is:

It was determined that a staff person had disclosed to the Director that they "tapped" a child in the face for them biting which left a red mark on the child's face. This incident would be considered a serious violation as defined. This matter was not reported to the Child Development Division as required by this rule.

The following corrective action is due by 10/17/2025:

This license is being reviewed for further regulatory action.

Reg. No.: 3.3.2

The licensee, staff, auxiliary staff, and partner staff working with children are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect pursuant to 33 V.S.A. §4913 and are required to report to the Child Abuse Hotline when they reasonably suspect abuse or neglect of a child. This report must be made within twenty-four (24) hours of the time information regarding the suspected abuse or neglect was first received or observed.

The factual basis for the violation is:

Through staff interviews it was learned that staff had shared with the Director they had "tapped" an infant child's face because they had bit, which left a red mark on the child's face. The Director, nor Staff C, made a report to the Family Services Division as required by this rule. Additionally, Staff C was asked if they felt abuse or neglect was occurring, they reported that sometimes they feel neglect occurs by staff at the program. Staff C has however, not made a report of neglect as required.

The following corrective action is due by 10/17/2025:

This license is being reviewed for further regulatory action.

Reg. No.: 3.4.3

A system for taking attendance, including documentation of the time when each child arrives and departs each day he/she attends the CBCCPP, shall be established. The licensee shall save all daily attendance records identifying the hours of children's attendance for at least twelve (12) months from the date that care is provided.

The factual basis for the violation is:

Upon review of children's attendance between 9/15/2025-9/26/25 there were five (5) times that children were not signed out of the program. With children's attendance not being accurate, the Division is unable to determine compliance with staff child ratios. This is a repeat violation.

The following corrective action is due by 10/17/2025:

This license is being reviewed for further regulatory action.

Reg. No.: 3.4.6.5

Staffing Schedule: A licensee shall maintain a written record of the daily schedule for at least 365 days of all staff including exact days and hours worked and the group of children to whom they are assigned.

The factual basis for the violation is:



Staff schedules and children's schedules were provided for review. It appears on several days that groups operated out of staff: child ratios. However, the reliability of the documents is uncertain as there are times that no staff appear to have been signed in to care for children in a particular group where children had been signed in to, as well as times staff appeared to have left leaving no staff documented as being present to care for children. These inconsistencies result in the inability to accurately use the staff schedule to determine compliance with ratios, or to confirm who was present at any given time.

The following corrective action is due by 10/17/2025:

This license is being reviewed for further regulatory action.

Reg. No.: 5.10.1.13.1

The licensee shall ensure that the CBCCPP has an operating telephone that is present and in service at all times children are present. The telephone number shall be provided to the Division and the parents of children that are enrolled. If an answering machine is used, staff shall check it every fifteen (15) minutes to ensure parents are able to communicate with staff during the day.

The factual basis for the violation is:

When asked about having a phone onsite, staff indicated that they couldn't locate the phone for the program. It had been shared that the whereabouts of the phone was last known on 10/3/25, and was located after the 10/8/25 site visit occurred.

The following corrective action is due by 10/17/2025:

This license is being reviewed for further regulatory action.

Reg. No.: 5.4.3.2

Children shall not be required to sleep. Children who do not nap shall be provided space and equipment for quiet play.

The factual basis for the violation is:

Children in the toddler room were told repeatedly by Staff B and the Director to get on their mats, to lay down, and told they needed to sleep multiple times during a one (1) hour time span. Staff B was heard saying in a harsh tone: "You are not supposed to be doing that you are supposed to take a nap," and "If you don't lay down you will be sorry!" The Director was heard saying: "We're not talking anymore it is nap time- we don't talk at nap time!"

The following corrective action is due by 10/17/2025:

This license is being reviewed for further regulatory action.

Reg. No.: 6.2.1.3

The program director shall ensure that the number of staff present meets requirements described in the chart below for ages of children, maximum group size, and staff/child ratios at any time of day.

The factual basis for the violation is:

Upon arrival at the program on 10/8/25, one (1) staff was alone with six (6) infant children; four (4) of which were awake. The ages of children present required two (2) staff to meet compliance with this rule. This is a serious violation that requires a Parental Notification Letter. A copy of this report must be provided to each parent of each child enrolled at the program on the date of this visit.

The following corrective action is due by 10/17/2025:

This license is being reviewed for further regulatory action. Provide the names and contact information for all parents of enrolled children to Licensors Stannard by 10/17/2025.



Reg. No.: 6.2.5.2

Staff shall appropriately hold, touch, smile and talk to children.

The factual basis for the violation is:

Through staff interviews, it was reported that staff have been heard screaming at children, at times loud enough to be heard from other classrooms. It was shared that on one (1) occasion, after being screamed at, a little boy was observed reacting in a manner similar to a panic attack. Staff report the yelling at children occurs daily. While onsite on 10/09/2025, Licensor Stannard was able to listen to Staff B and the Director without them being aware. During this observation, Staff B was heard saying to, and in the presence of children in harsh tones: "I do yell because they need discipline!" "I don't want to hear it- you are done!" "Get away from him now!" "Lay down I'm not fighting with you your mom can deal with you," "You're next," "You need to talk to her mother about how she doesn't take a nap like this- I'm going to call her!" Following a child crying, Staff B stated in a harsh tone "Then you better go lay down!" When the child cried louder, Staff B stated, "You better lay down right now!" The Director was heard saying to children in harsh tones: "Go to your mat ___! and "Lay down ___!" (multiple times each), "She's being bad- she's not listening." When a child asked "My mother?" The Director responded to the child "Yes! Your mother! I'm going to tell her!" The Director was not heard intervening when Staff B was speaking to children in the manner reported. Children were heard crying after comments were made. One (1) child was heard stating they wanted their mother, and another child was heard stating "I want mommy" multiple times while crying. When concerns were shared with the Business Manager, they indicated hearing Staff B speak inappropriately to children during this same observation period, as they had been present in the building. The Business Manager stated that they texted the Director regarding this during the observation, and confirmed they did not see the Director address the matter. The Business Manager also advised that they had been told previously of concerns regarding the Director by staff and now feels they should have handled those concerns differently.

The following corrective action is due by 10/17/2025:

This license is being reviewed for further regulatory action.

Reg. No.: 6.2.5.7

Children shall be attended to when they cry.

The factual basis for the violation is:

While Licensor Stannard observed conversations in the Toddler classroom, at which time staff were unaware were being conducted, a loud thump was heard followed by a child crying. Staff B was heard saying to children: "I don't want to hear it- you were running around, you hit yourself in the head- that's your problem! Sit down!" "You don't listen!" "That's what happens and I don't feel sorry for you!" The child is heard continuing to cry and no staff were heard intervening to check on the child or console him. The Director was in the room with Staff B and was not heard intervening either.

The following corrective action is due by 10/17/2025:

This license is being reviewed for further regulatory action.

Reg. No.: 6.2.6.6

The program director shall ensure that no person be left alone with children without approval from the Division based on the results of a background check that includes fingerprinting; with the exception of a parent may be left alone with his/her own child(ren).

The factual basis for the violation is:

On 10/8/25, Staff A was with a group of children with no other staff present. Staff A had not received fingerprint supported clearance to be alone with children. The Director and Staff C both confirmed that Staff A has worked alone with children on multiple occasions. The program received a letter stating that on 08/26/2025 indicating that Staff A had not been cleared to be alone with children, as well as verbal and email communication from the Division stating the same. This is a repeat violation.

The following corrective action is due by 10/17/2025:

This license is being reviewed for further regulatory action.

Reg. No.: 6.2.7.4.1

No form of inappropriate discipline or corporal punishment shall be used with children such as but not limited to: Hitting, shaking, biting, pinching;

The factual basis for the violation is:

A concern was reported that the infant teacher had injured an infant child. Staff C reported to Licensors Stannard that approximately seven (7) to eight (8) months ago they had been bit on the heel by Child A (an infant) and responded by "tapping" their face with four (4) fingers which left a red mark on the child's face. Staff C stated they did tell the Director the day after this occurred, but did not complete an incident report nor tell the infant's family.

The following corrective action is due by 10/17/2025:

This license is being reviewed for further regulatory action.

Reg. No.: 6.2.7.4.5

No form of inappropriate discipline or corporal punishment shall be used with children such as but not limited to: Inflicting mental or emotional punishment such as humiliating, shaming, threatening, or frightening a child; or

The factual basis for the violation is:

While onsite on 10/9/25, Licensors Stannard was able to listen to Staff B and the Director without them being aware. During this observation the Director and Staff B were heard saying the following to children in harsh tones: When a child asked why Child A was crying, Staff B stated "Because she's being bad!" The Director then stated "She's being bad, she's not listening." During another instance, the Director stated "Child A you need to lay down or I'm gonna... you know what you need to put your back down or I'm gonna put your back down!" Additionally, The Director stated to the children "You guys are tired," at which time Staff B stated to the Director "I know- everyone is bugging me too!" While a child was crying and asking for their pacifier, Staff B was heard stating multiple times: "You throw it you lose it!" Staff B additionally stated "You get up and I will throw that away (referring to the child's pacifier) and your blanket and everything else!"

The following corrective action is due by 10/17/2025:

This license is being reviewed for further regulatory action.

Reg. No.: 6.2.7.6

Profanity and obscene language shall not be used in the CBCCPP while children are present.

The factual basis for the violation is:

During observations of the toddler classroom with staff unaware, Licensors Stannard heard a child ask to wash their hands two (2) times, at which time Staff B stated to the child: "Yes pain in the ass, let's go." Additionally, Staff B was heard saying to the Director: "Whoever turned us in I'm going to punch in the head," as well as "Like I said whoever did it I'm gonna kill them." The Director was not heard interjecting or speaking to Staff B regarding the content or language used in the presence of children.

The following corrective action is due by 10/17/2025:



This license is being reviewed for further regulatory action.

Send an email to Bridget.Sheldrick@vermont.gov before the due date for the corrective action stating what has been done to correct the violation(s) and the date(s) that the items were corrected. The e-mail (s) shall serve as proof that program has made the required corrections.

You have the right to appeal, within 30 days, the Department's determination of violations and other regulatory related decisions, such as limits or conditions or the requirement that you complete a corrective action plan. See 3 V.S.A. §3091. You must file your appeal in writing to the Division at the address listed above. For more information about your rights and responsibilities consult the regulations that apply to your program as these are outlined in the regulations section that describes the relationship between a licensee and the Child Development Division.

If you have questions about your appeal rights or the public record, contact the Child Development Division, Licensing Appeals at 800-649-2642.

Filing an appeal does not keep the violation or related determination out of the public record. If an appeal is successful, then those violation(s) or determination(s) will be taken out of the public record at the end of the process.

