

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

In the matter of

License #: DG410405081

Connie Rookus

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ORDER OF SUMMARY SUSPENSION

The Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, by Division Director Erika Bigelow and Bureau Director Emily Laidlaw, Child Care Licensing Bureau, hereafter referred to as “the Bureau,” orders the summary suspension of the license of Licensee, Connie Rookus, to operate a group child care home pursuant to the authority of the Michigan Administrative Procedures Act, 1969 PA 306, MCL 24.292(2). The Department has found that the public health, safety, or welfare of children requires the emergency action of summary suspension for the following reasons:

1. On or about March 15, 2021, Licensee was issued a license to operate a group child care home with a licensed capacity of 14 at 9850 Young Avenue, Rockford, Michigan 49341.
2. Prior to the issuance of the license, and during subsequent modifications of the statutes and rules, Licensee received copies of the Child Care Organizations Act, the licensing rule book for family and group child care homes, and the Child

Protection Law. These rules and statutes are posted and available for download at www.michigan.gov/lara.

3. On February 1, 2023, the Bureau received a complaint regarding Licensee's home, Licensee #DG410405081, alleging that Licensee locks children inside tents during naptime using small padlocks on the outside of the tents so the children cannot get out. On February 1, 2023, Licensee was alone with 13 children and placed infants in bouncy seats inside play yards and covered the play yards with sheets.
4. On February 3, 2023, Licensee made the following statements:
 - a. Licensee admitted to placing children in child-sized tents and locking them inside using padlocks. She stated she normally would remove the locks before allowing parents to tour the home. She admitted that she knew locking the children in tents was wrong, however she did not think that it was abusive.
 - b. Licensee stated that she locks five to six children individually inside the tents.
 - c. Licensee stated that it was easier to lock children in tents to ensure their safety and to know that they were not destroying things.
5. On February 6, 2023, Licensing Consultant Pamela Walker received the following information:
 - a. On February 3, 2023, Child Care Staff Member (CCSM) Debra Sainer was alone with approximately 12 to 13 children at the Licensee's home. When asked, Ms. Sainer was unsure the exact number of children in care.

- b. When asked, Ms. Sainer initially claimed that the tents are never locked.
 - c. On February 3, 2023, there were two child-sized tents secured with a padlock in a bedroom on the upper level of the home. One of the tents was placed in the middle of a queen size bed. Ms. Sainer then admitted that the two tents were locked and contained children. The door to the bedroom was also closed, further impeding supervision.
 - d. On February 3, 2023, there were two child-sized tents in a second bedroom on the upper level of the home. One of the tents was occupied by a child and secured with a padlock and fully covered with a sheet. The door to the bedroom was also closed, further impeding supervision.
 - e. Ms. Sainer stated that the padlocks were used to prevent children from getting out and have been used for the entire two years she has worked for Licensee.
 - f. On February 3, 2023, there were three play yards occupied by children that were encased in a black, opaque fabric enclosure that zips from the top. The fabric enclosure prevents the children from getting out the play yard.
6. On February 6, 2023, Ms. Walker completed an unannounced on-site inspection at Licensee's home and made the following observations:
- a. Licensee and Ms. Sainer were caring for 13 children under the age of 6 years.
 - b. There were three play yards occupied by children that were encased in a black opaque fabric enclosure on the upper level of the home and one

enclosed play yard on the lower level of the home. Ms. Walker instructed Licensee to remove the fabric enclosures from the play yards.

- c. There were two children under the age of 12 months each with a filled baby bottle inside separate play yards. The play yards were covered with fabric enclosures.

7. On February 6, 2023, during the onsite inspection, Ms. Walker interviewed Licensee who made the following statements:

- a. Licensee admitted to locking children inside individual tents using padlocks for approximately the past two to three years, including on February 3, 2023.
- b. Licensee admitted to being alone with 13 children under the age of 6 years on February 1, 2023. She also acknowledged that Ms. Sainer was the only child care staff member present with 13 children under the age of 6 years on February 3, 2023.
- c. Licensee admitted to putting a child, age 6 months, in a bouncy seat inside a play yard with an enclosure.

8. There is concern for the ongoing operation of this licensed child care home.

Based on the information provided to the Bureau, any children entering the home would be at risk of imminent harm. There is an active investigation regarding the allegations. To ensure the health, safety, and welfare of children, emergency action is required.

COUNT I

The conduct of Licensee, as set forth in paragraphs 3 through 7 above, provides grounds for summary suspension of the license pursuant to:

MCL 24.292

- (2) If the agency finds that the public health, safety or welfare requires emergency action and incorporates this finding in its order, summary suspension of a license may be ordered effective on the date specified in the order or on service of a certified copy of the order on the licensee, whichever is later, and effective during the proceedings. The proceedings shall be promptly commenced and determined.

DUE TO THE serious nature of the above violations and the potential risk it represents to vulnerable children in Licensee's care, emergency action must be taken to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of the children in care at this licensed child care home.

Therefore the provision of MCL 24.292 of the Administrative Procedures Act of 1969, as amended, is invoked. Licensee is hereby notified that the license to operate a group child care home is summarily suspended.

EFFECTIVE 6:00 p.m., on February 8, 2023, Licensee is ordered not to operate a group child care home at 9850 Young Avenue, Rockford, Michigan 49341, or at any other location or address. Licensee is not to receive children for care after that time or date. Licensee is responsible for informing parents or guardians of children in care that her license has been suspended and that Licensee can no longer provide care.

HOWEVER, BECAUSE THE Department has summarily suspended Licensee's license, an administrative hearing will be promptly scheduled before an administrative law judge. Licensee must notify the Department and the Michigan Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules (MOAHR) in writing within seven (7) calendar days after receipt of this Order if Licensee wishes to appeal the summary suspension and attend the administrative hearing. The written request must be submitted via email, fax, or mail to:

Michigan Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules
611 West Ottawa Street, 2nd Floor
P.O. Box 30695
Lansing, Michigan 48909-2484
Phone: 517-335-7519
FAX: 517-763-0155
MOAHR-BSD-Support@michigan.gov

MCL 24.272(1) of the Administrative Procedures Act of 1969 permits the Department to proceed with the administrative hearing even if Licensee does not appear. Licensee may be represented by an attorney at the administrative hearing at the Licensee's expense.

DATED: 02/08/2023



Erika Bigelow, Division Director
Child Care Licensing Bureau

DATED: 2/8/2023



Emily Laidlaw, Director
Child Care Licensing Bureau

This is the last and final page of the ORDER OF SUMMARY SUSPENSION in the matter of Connie Rookus, DG410405081, consisting of 7 pages, this page included.

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