

Compliance Officer  
Bright Horizons Family Solutions  
200 Talcott Avenue, South  
Watertown, MA 02472

October 3, 2004

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing on behalf of my family for two main purposes. First, I want to report issues at one of the BHFS centers. Second, I request that my tuition fees for the October month be refunded. The two purposes are closely related. "The center" refers to the Bright Horizons center also known as Cottage Kids, located in Sacramento, California. I believe that you should be worried that one of your centers is doing its worst to ruin the reputation of the corporation as a whole.

My wife and I were very pleased and impressed by the center in 2002, when we signed up our daughter for its toddler's class. All the way through two's and up to the transition to preschool, we did not have much cause to complain. The teachers were professional and nurturing.

Unfortunately, just about when the previous director, Vicky Froelicher, left, everything started to go downhill. Good teachers started to leave, and all the changes started to put a bit of stress on the children. The following is a list of first-hand experience:

- When our daughter transitioned from two's to preschool, Vicky said that our daughter was "spirited", and that the center was starting to "document" her. Vicky said that when there was enough evidence, she would recommend our daughter to see a child psychiatrist. First, no one at the center had any training in psychiatry; second, many teachers of our daughter confirmed that she did not have any more problems transitioning than others. We think that the primary teacher of our daughter was inexperienced, and he did not know how to help our daughter make the transition. After another teacher, Cathy, started to teach at the preschool room, no such problem was reported any more.
- The current director, Shawn Edwinston, organized a field trip with a date published on notices. With no prior warning, on the scheduled day, she said that because there were not enough parents to supervise the children, the trip is canceled. This was devastating to many children, my daughter included. How are we to teach our children to keep their promises when something like this happens at school?
- The same director told us (on a Thursday) that our daughter was not ready to move on to pre-K after the best friend of our daughter was advanced. Shawn was well aware of the friendship, and said that it would be beneficial to separate the two so

they could develop more independently In the following week, Shawn decided to advance our daughter to pre-K. What can *possibly* happen over a few days that prepared our daughter for pre-K? An alternative question to ask is, did Shawn discover any reason to advance our daughter?

- We requested that Carmen be assigned as our daughter's primary teacher because they were already familiar with each other (even before Carmen was transferred from pre-K to preschool). Verbally, Shawn agreed to assign Carmen as our daughter's primary teacher. Later, we found out that Shawn did not honor the agreement, and another primary teacher was assigned. Even when Carmen asked Shawn if we specifically requested her, Shawn denied that we expressed any preference. This was a **flat-out lie** that Shawn told Carmen. It would appear that *every* agreement with Shawn must be written and signed to make sure it will be honored. We have no faith in any verbal agreement that Shawn makes.
- My wife could hardly get a hold of Shawn right before we decided to pull our daughter out. In fact, on the day that we turned in our letter of termination notice, we were only able to leave the letter in a mailbox since there was no one in the office.
- After we turned in our termination notification, we have now waited for more than three weeks for the receipt for the September fees (paid in August). We need this receipt for dependent care reimbursement purposes. My wife has left numerous messages for Shawn during these three weeks, and yet we still have not received anything. Finally, the assistant director, Faith, told my wife on October 22<sup>nd</sup> that the receipt would be sent. As of October 28<sup>th</sup>, we still have not received it.
- Even though we paid for the October month, we did not receive the parent survey like the other parents. One would think that a child care center should be curious to find out why parents removed their children from the center.
- Since August, 2004, we know of at least four teachers leaving the center. In addition, there were at least two internal transfers among preschool and pre-K teachers. Changes are inevitable, but *this much* change is not normal, and it causes stress among the children as well as parents.

In summary, the administration of the center proved time and again that verbal agreements had no value, decisions were regularly flip-flopped, and requests (as simple as that of a receipt) were ignored. The administration had no traction with parents, and one can even say that traction was intentionally avoided.

Please note that this is only the tip of the iceberg. We also heard from many<sup>1</sup> other parents disturbing stories involving their own children at the center. Such stories range from scare/iron-fist tactics used on children to a shortage of funds for snacks. I will leave it up to those who are involved to write about their first-hand experience, but rest assured that more complaints are on their way.

My wife and I were concerned that if we disclosed the fact that Leia will be

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1 Ourselves included, at least four families with children in either preschool or pre-K have negative experiences to share.

leaving the center, her treatment at the center would be adversely affected. This is why we abruptly removed Leia instead of informing the center by September 25<sup>th</sup><sup>2</sup>. October 1<sup>st</sup> was the last day that our daughter went to the center.

We feel that we are entitled to a 100% refund of the fees we paid for October (\$730) because our termination was due to an abrupt change (for the worse) of care quality in a matter of just over one month. This refund is further justified by the fact that we have not received the September receipt for dependent care reimbursement purposes. In other words, we paid twice, out of our pocket, the tuition fees for September.

**You should know that we are taking our complaint at least to the Sacramento County Family Day Care Licensing agency as well as the California Community Care Licensing Division of the California Department of Social Services.** We are considering sending our complaint to additional agencies, and/or taking further action.

It is most unfortunate that I have to take time and energy from my family and work to write this letter. But this is nothing compared to the anger, frustration and worry that the entire family suffered from the mismanagement of the center. It is my most sincere hope that the corporate office will rectify the situation so that other families do not have to endure the same process.

Sincerely

Tak Auyeung, Ph.D. (Father of Leia Auyeung)

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<sup>2</sup> The 25<sup>th</sup> is the last day of a month to pay the fees for the following month without a late fee imposed.