

THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

In the Matter of:

The Baptiste Group, La Casa de Sidney	)	
ATTN: Gretchen and Kevin Baptiste	)	License No. 21035
1914 Vance Avenue	)	
Chattanooga, Tennessee 37404	)	

ORDER OF SUMMARY SUSPENSION OF LICENSE

Jennifer Nichols, Commissioner (hereinafter "Commissioner") of the Department of Children's Services (hereinafter "Department") hereby orders the summary suspension of the license of the Baptiste Group, La Casa de Sidney (hereinafter "Facility") to operate as a Residential Child Care Agency. As set out more fully below, the summary suspension is based upon a finding that the health, safety or welfare of the children in the care of the Facility imperatively requires such emergency action.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

1. Facility is a Residential Child Care Agency in Chattanooga, Tennessee, that is directed by Terrance Ware. Gretchen Baptiste and/or Kevin Baptiste are the owners/operators/principals of the Facility through the Baptiste Group. Each Baptiste and the Baptiste Group are being served this order. The Department issued a conditional license to the Facility on May 29, 2020, which was effective until August 28, 2020. The Department subsequently extended the Facility's conditional license for two additional periods: from August 29, 2020, to November 28, 2020, then again from November 29, 2020 until February 28, 2021. The Department granted Facility a full annual license on February 28, 2021, under license number No. 21035. License No. 21035 expires February 27, 2022.
2. On June 3, 2021, the Department conducted an unannounced visit in accordance with Tenn. Code Ann. § 37-5-513(a).
3. On June 3, 2021, as a part of the standard operating procedure for unannounced visits, the Department's staff spoke with six (6) youth present at the facility.

4. During the course of the youth interviews, a youth disclosed that he had witnessed a Facility staff member kissing another youth. Due to the disclosure made by the youth, Department staff initiated a referral to the child abuse hotline and an investigation into the allegation commenced.
5. On or about June 15, 2021, the Department was notified that a child had absconded from the Facility.
6. On or about June 22, 2021, the Department was additionally advised that all youth had been moved from the facility.
7. On June 30, 2021, the Chattanooga Police Department issued a press release that a staff member of the Facility, Randi Duarte, was being charged with Sexual Battery by an Authority Figure, Coercion of a Witness, and Tampering with Evidence.
8. The aforementioned facts constitute violations of Tenn. Comp. R. & Reg. 0250-04-05-.05(1)(a), 0250-04-05-.05(1)(c)(2), Tenn. Code Ann. § 37-1-409, Tenn. Code Ann. § 37-1-612, and Tenn. Code Ann. § 37-5-502(a)(3). The facility has proven an inability to hire individuals who are suitable and capable of caring for the children within Facility's care resulting in significant criminal charges against at least one staff member and potential for youth to be subject to further abuse or lack of adequate supervision.

Mr. Baptiste, Ms. Baptiste, and the Baptiste Group are hereby advised that, pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 37-5-514(d), they may have an informal hearing within three (3) business days of the issuance of this order before an administrative law judge or before a hearing officer who is not an employee of the Department. The informal hearing shall not be required to be held under the contested case provisions of the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act. The informal hearing is intended to provide an informal, reasonable opportunity for the licensee to present to the hearing official the licensee's version of the circumstances leading to the suspension order. The sole issue to be considered is whether the public health, safety, or welfare imperatively required emergency action by the Department and what, if any, corrective measures have been taken by the Facility following the violation of licensing laws or regulations and prior to the issuance of the order of summary suspension that eliminate the danger to the health, safety, or welfare of the children in the care of the Facility.

ENTERED and EFFECTIVE this 1st day of July 2021.



Jennifer Nichols

Commissioner, Department of Children's Services

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

The undersigned certifies that a true and exact copy of the foregoing Order of Summary Suspension has been filed and served upon the following person by U.S. mail, postage prepaid, and/or electronic mail on this 1 day of July, 2021.

Gretchen Baptiste
1510 Pennsylvania Avenue
McDonough, GA 30253
Gretchen@TheBaptisteGroup.com

Kevin Baptiste
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McDonough, GA 30253
kevinb@thebaptistegroup.com

The Baptiste Group, LLC
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The Baptiste Group, LLC
La Casa de Sidney
1914 Vance Avenue
Chattanooga, TN 37404

The Baptiste Group, LLC
Through Registered Agent
Kevin Baptiste
1906 Bailey Avenue
Chattanooga, Tn 37404

The Baptiste Group, LLC
Through Principal Address
Kevin Baptiste
1914 Vance Avenue
Chattanooga, TN 37404-3641



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Please address any request for a hearing to Douglas Earl Dimond to the email address listed above in writing in accordance with T.C.A. §37-5-514 (d).