

New ABC child care centre probed ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

A third Melbourne ABC Learning child care centre in less than 14 months is being investigated by the Department of Human Services regarding the supervision of a child.

ABC Learning's East Melbourne child care centre, in the old AFL House in Jolimont Road, is being investigated over an alleged incident in which a boy, believed to be aged three, went missing while being moved between the play area and indoor children's room.

The latest case of alleged lax supervision follows a February 2004 case at the Beach Babies child care centre in Mornington, in which a child was left in a cot after the centre closed for the night.

Charges of inadequate supervision of a child and failing to accurately maintain attendance records related to that case are to be heard in the Frankston Magistrates Court on Tuesday.

A spokesman for the Brighter Futures Family Services company, which owned Beach Babies, said last year that the company "was in the process of being sold" to ABC Learning at the time of the incident.

He said ABC was installing its own practices before making a name change.

It is believed lawyers for the Department of Human Services are uncertain if the case will proceed because of disagreement over who was responsible for the centre at the time of the incident.

An ABC Learning child care centre in Hoppers Crossing has been charged with inadequate supervision and not protecting a child from hazard after a toddler scaled the centre's fence and wandered off for more than an hour. The Sunshine Magistrates Court is due to hear that case next month.

While the Department of Human Services said it was yet to take disciplinary action arising out of the East Melbourne centre incident, it did confirm that investigations were continuing.

A spokeswoman for ABC Learning said she could not comment on cases related to a specific child.

- reprinted from The Age

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