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**West Miami-Dade daycare staffer charged with manslaughter after toddler drowning**

By DAVID OVALLE

A West Miami-Dade daycare operator was arrested Wednesday for the death of a toddler who squeezed through a pool fence, jumped in the water and drowned.

Zobeida Gonzalez, 63, of the Mayling Brache Family Day Care, was charged with aggravated manslaughter and child neglect with great harm.

The toddler, 3-year-old Jonathan Feliciano, fell in the pool on the afternoon of Dec. 22 at the daycare facility, 2955 NW 99th St.

The daycare is owned by Mayling and Nivaldo Brache. That morning, the child’s parents left him in the care of Gonzalez, Mayling’s mother, who helps run the facility.

Gonzalez initially told Miami-Dade homicide detectives that she left the boy alone for “only a minute or two” in an outside play area as she went inside to turn off an air conditioning unit.

But that was a lie, police say. Surveillance video from a neighbor’s yard captured the entire episode – and showed that the baby was actually unattended for at least 29 minutes, according to an arrest warrant.

The video showed the toddler playing on the stairs of the above-ground pool for more than six minutes before jumping into the water. He spent nearly 23 minutes in the water before the daycare owners discovered the child and pulled him out to attempt CPR.

Detectives soon discovered other problems with the daycare, according to an arrest warrant.

The operators had never obtained the proper permit for the pool. In fact, the owners told the insurance company that there was no pool, according to a warrant filed by Miami-Dade Detective Jonathan Grossman.

The boy also died on a Saturday but the facility was not licensed to operate on weekends.

There also was no fence or barrier between the outdoor play area and the pool area. As for the wooden pool fence itself, detectives determined it was “inadequate for preventing children from accessing the pool.”

Prosecutors decided to press charges after detectives and doctors from the Miami-Dade Medical Examiner’s Office conducted a re-creation of the drowning.

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