Iowa Department of Human Services
CHILD CARE CENTER EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE

Name of Center: A to Z Learning Center & Daycare-University Ave **Enrollment:** 102 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 22647

Street: 4828 University Ave **City:** Cedar Falls Iowa **Zip** 50613 **County:** Black Hawk

Mailing Address: 4828 University Ave, Cedar Falls, IA, 50613

Director's Name: Chris York & Megan Gambell **Phone Number:** 319-266-6755

On-Site Supervisor(s): Jennifer Smith **E-Mail:** atoz@cfu.net

Date(s) of Visit:

Licensing Visit **Unannounced Visit** **Off Year Visit** X **Administrative Change**

LICENSING VISITS

New Application **Re-Application** X **NA**

Signed Application (470-0722) Received **Yes** **No** X **NA** **Date Signed:**

FIRE INSPECTION **State** X **Local** **NA** **Is Fire Inspection Approved?** X **Yes** **No** **NA**

Date Inspected: 07-17-2023

Comments :

LICENSE TYPE: X **Child Care** **Preschool (ages 3-5 meets three hours or less per day)**

Financial Type: X Profit Non-Profit NA

Accredition: Accredited NAEYC NSACA Other X NA

Program Serves: X Infants (0-23 mo.) X 2 Years X Preschool-Age X School-Age

Get-Well Evening Care Special Needs

SCHEDULE: X Year-round School-Year Summer Only

HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General	20	12	43	30	105
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 08-01-2024 to 08-01-2026
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Becky Frost **Date:** 12-27-2024

I. IF CURRENT LICENSE IS PROVISIONAL, IDENTIFY THE CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

N/A

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

On 07/23/24 I made an unannounced licensing visit to A to Z Learning Center and Day Care in Cedar Falls. I met with Megan Gambell, an on-site supervisor. Ms. Gambell started with the center in October 2017, but also worked with the program prior to this. Jennifer Smith is also an on-site supervisor and a teacher in a classroom. Ms. Smith has worked for A to Z since 2001 and she has completed many hours of child development-related training. Ms. Gambell and Ms. Smith have obtained their National Administration Credential (NAC). A to Z Corporation operates four childcare centers in the Waterloo-Cedar Falls area. Chris York is the executive director of the centers. She has been involved with childcare for many years and she has been the director of A to Z since it opened in 1991. Ms. York is also NAC certified. The center employs fifteen employees.

The center is in a free-standing building. The program operates Monday through Friday from 5:30 am until 6:00 pm. It serves children who are six weeks old through twelve-years-old. There are currently 102 children enrolled.

The program utilizes the following classrooms: infants (Bear Cubs), two toddler rooms (Alligators are 8-12 months and Ducklings are 12-24 months), two two-year-old rooms (the Monkey room is for the younger two-year-olds and the Teddy Bear room is for the older two-year-olds), two three-year-old rooms (the Doodle Bug room is for the younger three-year-olds and the Jungle Friends room is for the older group), four-year-olds (Dinosaurs), the Sea Creatures room is for four and five-year-olds, and school-aged children (Clowns I and Clowns II). An inspection of each room was completed. All rooms were in ratio the day of the visit.

Windows provide natural lighting in most rooms. The Clowns room is located downstairs and has minimal natural light, and the Doodle Bug room is located between rooms but receives natural light from the entrance. The rooms are decorated with pictures of the children, the children's art projects, and posters to assist the children with the learning process, such as the alphabet, shapes, colors and numbers. The children's birthdays were posted. There is an area for circle time in the rooms.

The centers observed on the day of the licensing visit include library, Lego/blocks/Lincoln Logs, table toys, games, puzzles, transportation, puppets, computer, art, dramatic play, listening, writing, math, science/discovery, woodworking, sensory table and music. Centers were arranged in a manner that allowed easy movement between activities, but it also allowed for clear supervision by staff members. Materials were in good condition. The materials are located at the child's level, so they were easily accessible to the children.

The center uses a variety of other resources to develop lesson plans. The curriculum is well-balanced and provides a variety of activities to meet the physical, emotional and developmental needs of the children. Activities are based on themes. The themes are the same throughout the center for the preschool children and younger. The school-aged room has their own themes. Each teacher prepares lesson plans with age-appropriate activities for their class. A lesson plan was available for review in all the rooms.

There was a phone with emergency numbers and the center's address and phone number in the classrooms or shared by

classrooms. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and evacuation diagrams were posted by all the main program doors and outdoor exits throughout the center. A daily schedule was posted in each room.

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. I reviewed documentation of monthly playground inspections. A radon test was completed in October 2022 and is good for two years. Results were within EPA guidelines. The fuel burning inspection was completed and no concerns were noted. A carbon monoxide detector was on site on each level. They are in the school-aged room on a pillar and in the storage room near the office. Outlets were protected. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 07/17/23.

The center participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The center provides breakfast, lunch and a morning and afternoon snack. There are four rotating menus. Menus were posted. The kitchen was observed to be clean and organized. The center uses the three-step method to wash dishes by hand. Allergies are posted in the kitchen. There are two refrigerators, and two upright freezers and thermometers were present. Food items are stored according to NHSPS guidelines.

The program provides two types of formula. If the parents want a different brand, they must provide it. The center provides baby food and cereal. Bottles are returned to the kitchen to be washed and sanitized.

The center uses bleach and water to sanitize the food tables and disinfect the changing tables. I observed the teacher prepare the tables for snack and proper procedures are followed. I observed and discussed diaper changing procedures with the staff members and proper procedures are followed.

I observed daily sheets in the rooms for children under the age of two-years-old.

The parent information is located on a bulletin board inside the entrance near the office. The mandatory reporter, childcare consultant and the handbook availability were posted. The license was conspicuously hung. A no-smoking sign was posted at the entrance.

The outdoor play area consists of four separate fenced in areas. The outdoor play area is divided into sections to serve specific age groups. Woodchips are used for surface cushioning on two of the play areas and they are replenished frequently. The area for the infants and toddlers is a grassy area with some small toys. There is a tree for shade.

The second area is for two-year-olds and three-year-olds. It has woodchips for surface cushioning, but also has a grassy area. There is climbing equipment with slides. There is a picnic table, playhouse and a basketball hoop. The building overhang provides shade.

The third area is for preschool children. Woodchips are used as surface cushioning, but it also has a grassy area. There are a couple pieces of climbing equipment with a tunnel, slides and monkey bars. There is also riding toys, a sandbox, dramatic play pieces and a merry-go-round. The woodchips are so high that the merry-go-round is unable to be used. There is also a concrete area to play basketball. There are trees for shade.

The school-aged area is mostly grass. There is a concrete basketball court in the area. There is a sandbox. Trees provide shade. A picnic table is available. I would recommend more items in this area to entertain the children while they are outside.

Staff and children files were reviewed at the time of the licensing visit. I reviewed twelve children files. They were in great condition.

I reviewed two staff files. They were in great condition.

Ms. Gambell is in the process of updating staff and parent handbooks for IQ4K. The necessary written emergency procedures and policies were present. Emergency Preparedness Plans have been completed.

Staff members were observed to interact with the children in a positive manner. They were actively engaged in activities and introduced fun and educational items to the children during play. Staff members provided clear and easy to understand directions. They modeled positive manners. They provided the children with praise and used positive redirection when necessary. They were enthusiastic while engaged with the children. They were observed to be nurturing as they held children on their laps and comforted them when they were upset. Child friendly music played in several classrooms. The children appeared to enjoy their time at the center.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

Ms. Gambell states the staff members have great teamwork. They fill in as needed and where they are needed. Ms. Gambell states they are short staffed and using staff members from another A to Z center, but her staff members have been great.

Ms. Gambell states they have some of the greatest families ever.

Ms. Gambell states they have several staff members who have longevity with the program.

Ms. Gambell states they have a good center and they do everything they can to make sure the center is run properly and meet the needs of the workers.

Ms. Gambell and Ms. Smith are amazing leaders for the center and they make a great team. They each bring a different skill set to the administrative team and they balance one another out.

The center is applying for an IQ4K level 1.

The center has a great summer program for school-aged children. They visit several fun locations almost daily to entertain the children.

I observed staff members go around the center several times to make sure rooms are in ratio.

The center provides transportation to the Cedar Falls schools.

IV. IDENTIFY THE ASPECTS OF OPERATION THAT FALL BELOW THE STANDARDS REVIEWED:

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

A full license is issued. All DHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period.

An administrative change is being made to name Megan Gambell as a co-director. She started with A to Z in August 2008. She has been the on-site supervisor for the program for many years.

*Note: If you are the Child Care Center Director and you feel something is unclear or unjustly cited, please contact your DHS Licensing Consultant to discuss the issue. The child care director may also send a response which will be placed in the licensing file.

*Note: If you are a member of the general public, there may be additional information contained in the public file. You may contact the DHS Licensing Consultant to inquire.