Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Aurelia Day Care Inc

Provider No.: 29139

Address: 216 Ash ST, Aurelia, IA, 51005

County: Cherokee

Director's Name: Karen Barrera

On-Site Supervisor:

Phone Number: 7124342521

E-Mail: aureliadaycare@gmail.com

HHS Visit Date: 04/20/2026

Licensing Period: 06/01/2025 to 06/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 07/05/2023

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

- [ ] PTO
- [X] Licensing Visit
- [ ] Drop In
- [ ] Administrative Change

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

- [ ] Accrediation

Program Duration:

- [X] Year-Round
- [ ] School Year
- [ ] Summer Only

Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM		
Tuesday	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM		
Wednesday	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM		
Thursday	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM		
Friday	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM		
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

- [X] Infant(0-<24 Months)
- [X] Toddler
- [ ] PreSchool
- [X] School Age
- [ ] All Ages

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	19	21		21	61
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

I completed an unannounced visit at the center on 04/20/26. I spoke with the director, Karen Barrera. Ms. Barrera has previously worked at this center and in the Head Start program in Denison. She is also a registered nurse. The program has been in a period of transition, as there have been two previous directors within a short time frame, which has made it challenging to keep up with required paperwork. Ms. Barrera has been working diligently to update records, complete staff training, and ensure compliance with licensing requirements. The center is also working regularly with its CCR&R Consultant.

The program operates in a free-standing building located on the Aurelia Elementary School campus. It provides daycare and preschool services for infants through school-age children. Preschool and school-age children utilize a classroom within the elementary school building. The main center building contains three classrooms defined by age group: infant, toddler, and two/three-year-old. The elementary school is currently in the process of taking over the preschool classroom, which will result in a separate license for the preschool program.

All areas of the program were observed during the visit. Observations included classroom environments and activities, nutrition practices, health and safety procedures, playground use, field trip and transportation practices, and an administrative records review. The center has cameras installed throughout the facility.

There are 66 children enrolled in this program and 12 present at the time of my visit.

As I moved from room to room, I observed a warm and engaging learning environment. Each classroom included a variety of visual aids such as the alphabet, colors, counting materials, calendar activities, and weather charts. Children’s artwork

was displayed throughout the rooms, showcasing their creativity and providing a welcoming, personalized atmosphere. Photos of children and their families were arranged on a "family tree," helping strengthen connections between home and school.

This program uses the I-LiLo curriculum, which supports children's development through play-based, developmentally appropriate learning experiences. The curriculum offers guidance for teachers across all early learning domains and encourages activities that build social, emotional, cognitive, and physical growth in meaningful ways. Some staff have been trained in PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) with the goal of getting all staff trained. PBIS is a proactive, evidence-based approach that helps staff teach and reinforce positive behaviors, create predictable routines, and support children's social and emotional development. Staff use PBIS strategies to guide children with clear expectations, consistent routines, and positive reinforcement, helping create a calm, supportive, and responsive classroom environment.

I observed staff actively engaging with children, including sitting with them at a table and participating in a craft activity together. Staff in the infant room were able to clearly explain appropriate diapering procedures and demonstrated an understanding of required health and safety practices. The program uses the Playground app to communicate with parents about their children throughout the day. Staff share updates, photos, and notes to help families stay informed and connected to their child's experiences.

Menus are posted, and while the center does not participate in the CACFP program, they do follow CACFP nutritional guidelines when planning meals and snacks. All meals are prepared on site. The kitchen was clean, well-organized, and demonstrated appropriate food storage and sanitation practices.

Monthly fire and tornado drills are documented, along with routine playground inspections. The playground has been updated and now includes new climbing structures, a riding area, music play equipment, a new fence, and a sandbox. The surfacing is poured rubber, and there is adequate shade available for children. The program operates as an all-electric facility, and the site is equipped with a radon mitigation system.

The daycare maintains a positive atmosphere, and staff-to-child ratios observed during the visit were more than adequate.

A current goal of the center is to continue working toward achieving their IQ4K certification.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

Karen and Mackenzie have been participating in LEEAD training through CCR&R. The LEEAD program (Learning, Encouraging, and Enhancing Development) provides coaching and professional development to support directors in strengthening program quality, staff practices, and leadership skills. Her participation demonstrates the center's commitment to continuous improvement and to providing a supportive, developmentally focused environment for children and staff.

The school and the daycare center have been working collaboratively to address staffing challenges. As part of this effort, the school will assume responsibility for the preschool program, which will allow additional staff to be reassigned and support the daycare center more effectively.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

109.6(2): Director or on-site supervisor on-site during the hours of operation or a minimum of six hours of center's hours of operation.Information on on-site supervisor's qualifications is submitted to the consultant prior to employment and is sufficient to make a determination.On-site supervisor meets qualifications or is "qualifiable" with a plan established to meet qualifications.Another responsible adult is clearly designated as the interim on-site supervisor if the on-site supervisor is temporarily absent from the center.

109.6(4)c: Center repeats Iowa record checks at a minimum of every two years or when aware of additional child abuse or criminal history that occurs.

109.6(4)d: Center repeats national criminal history checks at a minimum of every four years or when aware of additional history that occurs.

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

109.7(1): All staff (within first three months of employment):Iowa's training for the mandatory reporting of child abuse.At least one hour of training regarding universal precautions.Certification in First Aid infant, child, and adult cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) or equivalent certification approved by the Department. A valid certificate indicating the date of training and expiration date shall be maintained.Certification in infant, child, and adult first aid that uses a nationally recognized curriculum or is received from a nationally recognized training organization including the American Red Cross, American Heart Association, American Safety and Health Institute, or MEDIC First Aid or an equivalent certification approved by the Department. A valid certificate indicating the date of training and expiration date shall be maintained.Minimum health and safety trainings, (Essentials) approved by the Department. If significant changes occur to content, the Department may require the training be renewed.

109.7(2): Center directors and all staff have the required contact hours of training.

109.9(1)a: All files contain:Copy of a department criminal history record check form or any other permission form approved by Department of Public Safety for conducting an Iowa or national criminal history record checkCopy of a request for child abuse information form, when applicable.Copies of results of Iowa record checks conducted through the SING for review by the department upon request.Copies of national criminal history check results.Any department issued documents sent to the center related to a record check, regardless of findings.

109.9(1)c: All files contain documentation to indicate that ongoing staff training requirements are met, including current certifications in first aid/CPR and mandatory child abuse training.

4. Any corrective action plans, provisional license, and safety plans-steps to get into compliance

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

Targeted Assessment: Behavior Management

I discussed with Karen regarding her oversight of behavior management related to helping childcare staff: 1) Understand expectations, 2) managing frustrations, 3) monitor performance.

Karen shared that she would like all staff to be trained in PBIS, as she finds it to be an effective approach to classroom management and supporting children's social–emotional development. She is frequently present in classrooms and observes how staff respond to situations that may be challenging or frustrating. Karen maintains an open-door policy, allowing staff to communicate when they need a brief break from managing a difficult behavior to ensure safety and appropriate supervision. The center also has cameras throughout the facility, which support ongoing oversight and help ensure consistent practices.

It is also recommended for the center to continue working with CCRR to get on the IQ4K program, and files.

Director needs to email consultant by 07-01-25 confirming that all items that fall below standards have been corrected or a plan to address need for continuing education.

I do recommend that this board completes the CCRR training. I also encourage them to have director at all board meetings and that the director be involved in the hiring process.

A full license is recommended at this time.

At least one visit will be made to the center during the next year.

Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Date: 04/22/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Leann Steinhauer

Non-compliance with any of the mandated regulatory requirements listed above may lead to the cancellation or revocation of your Child Care License. Please take steps necessary to completely address each of the violations noted above.

Child Care Resource and Referral is an excellent resource for providers to access training options and support in your area. You can reach Child Care Resource and Referral at **https://iowaccrr.org**.