

CHILD CARE CENTER COMPLAINT

Name of Center: Little GEM Learning Center - North	Enrollment: 61	License ID: 51891
Street: 4750 42nd ST NE	City: Cedar Rapids	IA Zip Code: 52411 County: Linn
Mailing Address: 4750 42nd ST NE		
Mailing City: Cedar Rapids	IA Zip Code: 52411	
Director's Name: Emilie Inglebright	Center Phone Number: 319-200-2999	
On-Site Supervisors: Emilie Inglebright	E-Mail Address: ksmeisterling@gmail.com	

Date of Complaint: 08-12-2025**Date of Visit:** 08-15-2025
☐ Scheduled

 ☒ Unannounced

 ☐ NA

☒ Non-Compliance with Regulations Found

 ☐ Compliance with Regulations Found
RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE☒ **NO CHANGES to licensing status recommended**☐ **PROVISIONAL license from** _____ **to** _____☐ **SUSPENSION of License**☐ **REVOCATION of License****Complaint Details:**Did this complaint result in a serious injury? ☐ Yes ☒ NoDid this complaint result in a death to a child? ☐ Yes ☒ No**Summary of Complaint:**

On 8/12/2025, a complainant reported the licensor always texts owner Katie Meisterling before she arrives for a visit and then Katie calls or walks around the center to "warn" everyone that the licensor will be coming so they can hide things that are not in licensing standards. The complainant reported there is a sandbox with rocks that does not have enough sand which staff will lay a wooden board over when licensing comes. The complainant reported staff are constantly left out of ratio. The complainant reported during the week of 8/4/2025 to 8/8/2025, staff was left for over 90 minutes with 18 children age 3yo. The complainant reported staff was left outside with 26 children age 3-5yo with no other adult. The complainant reported staff was left alone with 20 children under 2yo. The complainant reported staff Cassi put a 4yo child in a time out for over 20 minutes. After 5 minutes, a staff let the 4yo child get-up but staff Cassi came back into the room putting the 4yo child back in time out and then left the building, leaving the 4yo child still in time out. The complainant reported she believe director Emilie is trying her best but gets little to no support from the owner Katie Meisterling.

Licensing Rules Relevant to the Complaint:

109.8(2) Ratio maintained in center as required: Brief absence of staff person permitted for 5 or less minutes when another staff person is present. At least one staff is present in every room where children are resting. If ratio reduced to one staff per room during nap time, does not exceed one hour and ratio in center is still maintained. Ratio in infant rooms is always maintained. When more than eight children are present on the licensed premises, at least two staff members shall be present. For a period of two hours or less at the beginning and end of the center's hours of operation, one staff member may care for eight or fewer children, provided no more than four of the children are under two years of age and there are no more than eight children in the center. Ratio exceeded for school-age children when school classes unexpectedly start late, are dismissed early, or cancelled. For no more than four hours, care is limited to children already in the program and licensed capacity is not exceeded.

109.11(4)a Center must have safe outdoor program area adjacent to the center, with sufficient square footage to accommodate at least 30 percent of the enrollment capacity at any one time at 75 square feet per child. Outdoor space must: Be free from litter and unsafe materials and free from contamination by the drainage or ponding of sewage or storm water. Include safe play equipment and an area of shade. Include fencing to protect from bodies of water or vehicular traffic.

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109.12(1) Program structure that uses developmentally appropriate practices and written program of activities planned to the developmental needs of children served. Program complements but does not duplicate school curriculum. Schedule of program is posted in a place visible to parents.

109.12(4)e The provider shall follow safe sleep practices for infants under one year of age: Infants shall always be placed on their backs for sleep. Infants shall be placed on a firm mattress with a tight fitted sheet. Infants shall not be allowed to sleep on a bed, sofa, air mattress or other soft surface. No child shall be allowed to sleep in any item not designed for infant sleeping, including but not limited to an infant seat, car seat, swing, or bouncy seat. No toys, soft objects, stuffed animals, pillows, bumper pads, blankets, or loose bedding shall be allowed in the sleeping area with the infant. No co-sleeping shall be allowed. Sleeping infants shall be actively observed by sight and sound. If an alternate sleeping position is needed, a signed physician or physician assistant authorization with statement of medical reason is required and an expiration date.

Inspection Findings:

On 8/15/2025, licensing conducted an unannounced visit to Little Gem Learning Center - North. The following is based upon a face-to-face interview with combined director/on-site supervisor (OSS) Emilie Inglebright, interviews with staff throughout the classroom, review of administrative items and observations while on-site:

441—109.3(237A) Inspection and evaluation. The department will conduct an unannounced on-site visit in order to make a licensing recommendation for all initial and renewal applications for licensure and will determine compliance with licensing standards imposed by licensing laws and these rules when a valid complaint is received.

109.3(1) At least one unannounced on-site visit will be conducted each calendar year. **RULE NOT VIOLATED. COMPLAINT NOT VALID.**

- Information gathered supports the program's annual monitoring visit occurs on a day that is unannounced to the owner, director, staff and so on. This licensor does not call or text owners, directors, staff, and so on alerting any to the date of the required annual visit. Unless there are other persons involved in complaint circumstances and/or an extenuating circumstance, this licensor also conducts unannounced complaint visits.

109.11(4)a Center must have safe outdoor program area adjacent to the center, with sufficient square footage to accommodate at least 30 percent of the enrollment capacity at any one time at 75 square feet per child. Outdoor space must: Be free from litter and unsafe materials and free from contamination by the drainage or ponding of sewage or storm water. Include safe play equipment and an area of shade. Include fencing to protect from bodies of water or vehicular traffic. **RULE VIOLATED. COMPLAINT VALID.**

- On 8/15/2025 licensing perused and photographed the outdoor play areas finding much weed-thistle-grass overgrowth, a lack (in some areas none) of cushion surfacing underneath outdoor equipment and partially tarp covered sand-sensory play area that included some small rocks.

- Licensing and Ms. Inglebright reviewed rules pertaining to safe outdoor areas and having sanitation and safety practices and procedures in place to reduce the risk of injury or harm to the children and reduce the transmission of disease. While present, licensing requested Ms. Inglebright contact owner Ms. Meisterling informing her that licensing was present and requesting immediate remedial action occur to improve the outdoor play areas. Discussion included increasing the frequency of weed-thistle-grass control measures to help prevent possible skin irritations, hidden tripping hazards, and transmission of pest-vermin-animal related illnesses. Discussion included adding cushion surfacing depth under all climbing equipment and swing areas as well as replacement or removal of the partially covered sand-sensory play area.

109.12(1) Program structure that uses developmentally appropriate practices and written program of activities planned to the developmental needs of children served. **RULE VIOLATED. COMPLAINT VALID.**

- Information gathered indicated a few weeks prior to this complaint report, staff Casandra C placed a preschool-age child in time out and then forgot she had done so.

- Ms. Inglebright talked about how when she became aware of the incident, an immediate internal investigation commenced. Ms. Inglebright acknowledged providing training and coaching on developmentally appropriate discipline and staff voice tones.

- It shall be noted, Ms. Inglebright reported believing a former employee made this complaint as there was much unhappiness expressed when discussing concerns of unreliability.

109.8(2) Ratio maintained in center as required. **RULE VIOLATED. COMPLAINT VALID.**

- On 8/15/2025, licensing perused all child areas. One room was observed to have 6 children under 2yo with only 1 staff. Licensing, management and staff reviewed ratio rules. Licensing, management and staff discussed how the center shall never accept more children into the program than they have staff to accommodate at any given time. On 8/15/2025 via email and after the on-site complaint visit, Ms. Inglebright provided additional documentation of having internally investigated the morning's ratio violation and how additional staff ratio training was provided.

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- On 8/15/2025, licensing perused all child areas. One room was observed to have 4 children under 2yo with 1 staff. One of the infants in this room was observed to be sleeping in an infant swing. Licensing and staff reviewed safe sleep rules. Staff then moved the infant from the infant swing to a crib.

Special Notes and Action Required:

Within 30 days of receipt of this report, please provide documentation via email as to how the above items were remedied. Failure to do so could result in a change of program status.

*Note: If you are the Child Care Center Director and you feel something is unclear or unjustly cited, please contact your DHHS Licensing Consultant to discuss the issue. The childcare 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 DHHS Licensing Consultant to inquire.

Consultant's Signature:

Amy Lyons

Date:

08-19-2025