Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: The Learning Tree Childcare Center

Provider No.: 52223

Address: 695 North Street, Lansing, IA, 52151

County: Allamakee

Director's Name: Jenny Cole

On-Site Supervisor: Jenny Cole

Phone Number: 5632869956

E-Mail: thelearningtreeccdirector@gmail.com

HHS Visit Date: 09/08/2026

Licensing Period: 10/01/2025 to 10/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 08/20/2026

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

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HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Tuesday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Wednesday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Thursday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Friday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	27	16	41	40	124
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

On 09/08/26 I made an unannounced off year licensing visit to The Learning Tree Childcare Center in Lansing. I met with Jenny Cole, the director and lead preschool teacher. She has a BA in family services and a master's degree in public administration. She has previous experience in a childcare center. The program employs eight staff members.

The program moved to a new location in Lansing and were given permission to start at this location on 09/01/26. The childcare program serves infants through school age children. The program operates Monday through Friday from 6:30 am until 6:00 pm. The three-year-old preschool program operates Tuesday and Thursday from 8:00 am until 3:00 pm. There are currently 75 children enrolled.

The childcare center operates out of the following classrooms: infant room, two-year-old room, three through five-year-old room (preschool), and school age room. An inspection of each room was completed. Windows provide natural lighting in most rooms. Artificial lighting is used in the school age room. The rooms are decorated with the children's art projects, and posters to assist the children with the learning process, such as the alphabet, shapes, colors and numbers. There are areas for circle time in the two-year-old room and preschool room.

The centers observed on the day of the licensing visit include library, Lego/blocks, table toys, games, puzzles, transportation, art, dramatic play, writing, math, science/discovery, music, technology, play dough, 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 child level so they are easily accessible to the children.

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There are cameras in each room so that the director can monitor the rooms for safety, staff interaction, and compliance with licensing standards.

The program uses a play-based curriculum and a variety of resources are used to develop lesson plans. Parent-teacher conferences are offered at a minimum of once each year. A permanent assessment portfolio is developed and maintained for each child. A lesson plan was available for review in the two-year-old room and preschool room. A daily schedule was posted for the preschool classroom. The school age room and two year old room need to have daily schedules posted.

There was a phone in each classroom. Emergency numbers and the center's address and phone number were not posted on the day of the visit. This has since been corrected. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and evacuation diagrams were posted near some of the main program doors and outdoor exits. The evacuation diagram must be posted near all exits out of a classroom.

Cribs and cots are used to nap in the infant room. Cots are used to nap in the rooms for the older children.

In the two-year-old room there are two bathrooms and each one has one toilet, one sink, and one changing table. In the preschool room there is one bathroom with one toilet and one sink. There is also a sink in the classroom. In the hallway across from the school age room there are two bathrooms. Each has one toilet and one sink. In the infant room there is one changing table and two sinks. Handwashing and diaper changing procedures were posted in all mandated locations.

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. I reviewed documentation of monthly playground inspections.

The radon test has not been completed in the new space yet. Ms. Cole states she will get this done.

The building is electric but Ms. Cole states propane is used for something in the building. You must get an annual fuel burning inspection completed on the propane tank. The carbon monoxide detectors are located on the ceiling as part of the fire safety system. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 08/20/26.

The program is not on the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) but follows the guidelines. Ms. Cole states she plans to apply for the food program. The children are given breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. The program provides breakfast and snacks and lunch is provided by the local high school and delivered to the program. Menus were available for review in the classroom. The school provides a new lunch menu each month. The center is using a weekly rotation for their breakfast and snack menu. Disposable products are used for breakfast and snacks. Lunch dishes are returned to the school.

The program has a kitchenette area in the break room. Ms. Cole was making some of the breakfast items at home and bringing them to the center. She has been informed that this is not allowed because I am unable to inspect her kitchen. There is a refrigerator in the kitchenette area and you must add thermometers to the refrigerator and freezer. The program has a refrigerator in the infant room and you must add a thermometer to the freezer portion. There is also a refrigerator in the preschool room and you must add a thermometer.

Food items were stored according to NHSPS guidelines in the kitchenette. There were food items in the infant room that were not stored according to NHSPS guidelines. Once a food item is opened it must be stored in a sealed plastic, metal or glass container and be dated.

The center provides one brand of formula, baby food and cereal. If the parents want a different brand they must provide it. The infant room staff members are washing bottles and dishes in the classroom but they are not sanitizing them. If dishes and bottles are washed in the classroom, they are required to be sanitized. There is a dishwasher in the kitchenette used to wash other dishes. You can send the infant room bottles and dishes to the kitchen to be put through the dishwasher.

The program uses bleach and water to sanitize the food tables and to disinfect the changing tables. You must label the bottles clearly in each room. The infant room did not have a sanitizer or disinfectant in the room.

In the infant room there was a sheet on the changing table mat. I informed staff members that the sheet must be removed immediately. The staff members were not cleaning and disinfecting the table between diaper changes. This must occur between every child. I discussed diaper changes with the staff members. Gloves are considered soiled and must be removed prior to putting on the new diaper and dressing the child. Also, staff members have not been washing the children's hands with soap and water following diaper changes. This must always occur. A separate garbage can with a lid is required for

soiled diapers in each room where diaper changes occur.

Ms. Cole informed me that the nurse consultant visited the program on 09/09/26 and she reviewed several items. She is going to provide safe sleep training soon and she will also visit the center to provide training on diapering and bathroom procedures.

The parent information is located on a bulletin board in the entrance. 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 program has a fenced-in grassy area near the entrance that is used as a playground. The center is currently trying to grow grass in this area. They can use the church parking lot across the street for gross motor play. This area has gravel. Ms. Cole states they are going to keep a natural playground. She has been in contact with neighbors across the street about using a large grassy lot for the children also.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

Staff members had great interaction with the children. I observed staff members provide the children with good bathroom and handwashing reminders. They assisted as needed. Staff members were patient and flexible with their schedules based upon the children's needs and interests. They talked with the children about using their words and sharing to solve problems. They actively engaged with the children in an enthusiastic manner. Staff members modeled good manners. Staff members provided the children with clear and easy to understand directions. Staff members interacted with the children at their level. They introduced them to learning activities and encouraged them to use their imaginations. In the infant room staff members were nurturing and attentive. They had good knowledge of the children's routines.

Ms. Cole states she has a "really good" group of staff members who are committed to the children and they are there because they want to be.

Ms. Cole states she has a strong board that helped them to expand the program and get to where they are now in the new building.

Ms. Cole states she believes in play-based learning for the children.

Ms. Cole states the center is a bus stop for the New Albin children.

The program is in a secure building. There are cameras in the classrooms and hallway. They can record video and audio.

The program expanded to a larger space and they are now caring for infants through school age children all year around. Ms. Cole ran into a lot of road blocks during the remodel but she was committed and accomplished her goal.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

109.10(13)b: Emergency instructions, phone numbers, and diagrams for fire, tornado, and flood shall be visibly posted and documented at least once a month for fire and tornado. Records shall be maintained for current and previous year. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and evacuation diagrams were posted near some of the main program doors and outdoor exits. The evacuation diagram must be posted near all exits out of a classroom.

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.
The school age room and two year old room need to have daily schedules posted.

109.12(4)b: Each infant and toddler shall be diapered in a sanitary manner as frequently as needed at a central diapering area. Diapering, sanitation, and hand-washing procedures shall be posted and implemented in every diapering area. There shall be at least one changing table for every 15 infants.

You must label the bottles clearly in each room. The infant room did not have a sanitizer or disinfectant in the room.
In the infant room there was a sheet on the changing table mat. I informed staff members that the sheet must be removed immediately. The staff members were not cleaning and disinfecting the table between diaper changes. This must occur between every child. I discussed diaper changes with the staff members. Gloves are considered soiled and must be removed prior to putting on the new diaper and dressing the child. Also, staff members have not been washing the children's hands with soap and water following diaper changes. This must always occur. A separate garbage can with a lid is required for soiled diapers in each room where diaper changes occur.

109.13(5): Centers shall ensure that food preparation and storage procedures are consistent with the recommendations of the CACFPs.
There were food items in the infant room that were not stored according to NHSPS guidelines. Once a food item is opened it must be stored in a sealed plastic, metal or glass container and be dated.

109.13(5)a: Sufficient refrigeration appropriate to perishable food is provided.
There is a refrigerator in the kitchenette area and you must add thermometers to the refrigerator and freezer. The program has a refrigerator in the infant room and you must add a thermometer to the freezer portion. There is also a refrigerator in the preschool room and you must add a thermometer.

109.13(5)c: Sanitary methods are used for dishwashing sufficient to prevent transmission of disease.
The infant room staff members are washing bottles and dishes in the classroom but they are not sanitizing them. If dishes and bottles are washed in the classroom, they are required to be sanitized.

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

N/A

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

A full license is issued for the remainder of the licensing period. All HHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period.

Targeted Assessment: Behavior Management:
I discussed with Ms. Cole her oversight of behavior management related to helping childcare staff: 1) Understand expectations, 2) managing frustrations, 3) monitor performance. Ms. Cole states they have a policy in their handbook that explains to staff members they need to get on the child's level, use positive words and phrases and provide verbal reminders of the rules. Ms. Cole states three staff members went through PBIS training this past summer and they are now using Tucker the Turtle techniques in the classrooms.

Ms. Cole states when a child is exhibiting disruptive behaviors they try to keep the other children away from that student. She states they also want to make sure the child is not hurting themselves. Ms. Cole states they have not talked about it specifically, but she believes staff members would be comfortable asking for help. She states the prior week she had a staff member ask for a break so she would not be frustrated.

Ms. Cole states to monitor the situation she has cameras she can review. There are phones in every room to ask for help. She states she can hear the classrooms from her office and her classroom.

Date: 09/21/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Becky Frost

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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**.