Iowa Department of Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER COMPLAINT

Name of Center: Little Stars Child Care Center **Enrollment:** 34 **License ID:** 51440

Street: 2250 W Ridgeway AVE **City:** Waterloo **IA** **Zip Code:** 50702 **County:** Black Hawk

Mailing Address: 2250 W Ridgeway AVE

Mailing City: Waterloo **IA** **Zip Code:** 50702

Director's Name: Vacant **Center Phone Number:** 319-883-6747

On-Site Supervisors: Cornelis "Necey" Muhammad **E-Mail Address:** directorlsccc22@gmail.com presidentlsccc@gmail.com

Date of Complaint: 04-07-2025 **Date of Visit:** 04-15-2025

[ ] Scheduled **[X]** Unannounced **[ ]** NA

[X] Non-Compliance with Regulations Found **[ ]** Compliance with Regulations Found

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE

[X] 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 ☒ No

Did this complaint result in a death to a child? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Summary of Complaint:

On 04/07/25 a concern was reported regarding Little Stars Childcare Center in Waterloo. It is reported that the infant and two-year-old rooms are frequently out of ratio. Two dates provided are 04/01/25 and 04/07/25.

A second allegation was reported on 04/07/25 with allegations that a child, age 3, sustained a rug burn type injury across the upper back on 04/03/25 while at the childcare center. The child did not have the mark prior to going to childcare.

A third concern was reported on 04/14/25. It is alleged that the program does not have working thermometers and they are sending several children home. They sent an entire infant room home saying they had temperatures of 101.7. This seems to occur when they are missing staff members. This is not a licensing violation, but I will discuss the concern with the director.

A fourth concern was reported on 05/02/25. It was reported there were only three staff members at the center and the staff members were told by Robin Smith to put all the children in one room and figure it out. There was a concern that the center was going to be out of ratio.

Licensing Rules Relevant to the Complaint:

109.8(2) Ratio maintained in center as required by age.

109.10(10) Recording incidents: Parents shall be notified on the day of the incident involving a child that includes:Minor injuries.Minor changes in health status.Minor behavioral concerns.Incidents resulting in injury to a child.Shall be verbally notified immediately when there is:A serious injury to a child.An incident resulting in significant change in health status.An incident includes child being involved in inappropriate, sexually acting out behavior.A WRITTEN report, fully documenting every incident, shall be provided to the parent or authorized person. This should be completed by staff that witnessed the incident and retained in child file.Serious injuries and deaths must be reported to the Department within 24 hours.

109.12(2)a Center does not use corporal punishment including spanking, shaking, or slapping.

Inspection Findings:

On 04/07/25 I made a collateral contact with Jordan Jackson from the Department of Health and Human Services. Mr. Jackson stated he was going to make a contact with the family and he would get back to me for a time to make a visit to the center. It was reported the center contacted the grandmother to pick the child up for a rash. The parent took the child to the doctor because the mark did not look like a rash. The doctor said the mark was a rug burn from possibly being drug across the carpet or concrete.

On 04/10/25 I made a collateral contact with Jordan Jackson from the Department of Health and Human Services. Arrangements were made to make a joint visit to Little Stars Childcare Center on 04/15/25. Mr. Jackson provided me with pictures of the injury. There was an obvious and substantial mark that appeared to be a rug burn across the child's shoulders.

On 04/15/25 Jordan Jackson and I made an unannounced visit to Little Stars Childcare Center in Waterloo. We met Robin Smith, the director, and with Cornelis "Necey" Muhammad, the on-site supervisor. Muhammad Shehata, the CEO of the center, was present via phone. They were informed of the reported allegations. Ms. Smith states a couple weeks ago a parent was upset. She reports she was not at the center when this occurred. Ms. Muhammad states that when the children woke up for nap the lead teacher in that classroom called her down to the room because a child woke up with what looked like a rash. The child woke up from nap with her arm outside of her clothing and was scratching herself. Ms. Muhammad put on gloves to look at the mark. Ms. Muhammad states in her opinion it looked like the child had a rash.

They called the grandmother to pick the child up and take the child to the doctor. The grandmother was told they would need a doctor's note for the child to return to childcare so that they knew the rash was not contagious. The following day the mother brought the child to childcare without a note. She had some Aveeno eczema cream for the mark. She was told the child cannot be at daycare without a note from the doctor and they left. Two or three days later they received a message on Procare that the child would no longer be attending that childcare center. The father said they knew the child was sent to the center without any marks and the child when taken to the doctor, the doctor reported the mark to be a rug burn. Mr. Shehata called the Dad and he wanted video footage looked through.

Mr. Shehata states his brother looked through the footage and did not see anything. The children are put down for nap after lunch (11:30-11:45 am) and wake up between 1:30-2:00 pm. The center states there was not an incident report completed.

Ashley N. was working in the room. Ashley was interviewed. Ashley states nothing happened to the child. She went down for a nap and when she woke up her arm was out through the neck part of her shirt. When Ashley went to put the arm back in the shirt, she noticed the child's entire back was red. It appeared to be brown up top and the rest of her back was red. It appeared the child had been itching this area for days. The child made the comment that her back was itchy. Ashley states she was rubbing the child's back so she would not scratch it. The grandmother picked the child up and said it looked bruised. Ashley states she told the grandma that in her opinion it looked like the child had been itching for days.

Ashley states she is not typically in this room and the lead teacher had to leave early. She does not think the classroom went outside on that date. Ashley states nothing happened with the other children prior to nap. The interview with Ashley was concluded,
Mr. Jackson showed Ms. Smith and Ms. Muhammad a picture of the mark on the child. Ms. Muhammed states that is not what her back looked like when she observed it. She thought it looked like the child was having an allergic reaction. Ms. Muhammad states she knows the difference between a bruise and carpet burn from a rash.

Mr. Jackson asked Mr. Shehata to provide him video footage for 04/03/25 from 9:00 am until 2:00 pm. Mr. Shehata agreed to do this.

On the day of my visit, the infant room was out of ratio with one staff member to five children. I asked Mr. Shehata to provide me video footage for 04/01 and 04/07 in the rooms to determine if they are out of ratio on these dates as well. Mr. Shehata agreed to do this.

I spoke with Ms. Smith about the concerns for working thermometers. Ms. Smith maintains the children had fevers and per the Essentials training they should send children home. I informed Ms. Smith that was correct. I asked her if she had concerns about the thermometers not working since so many children had fevers. She stated the Black Hawk County Health Department was contacted by a parent and the nurse consultant came to the center to check the thermometers and they worked. Children were not sent home because of missing staff. Ms. Smith said she sent children home based on the center policy, The Black Hawk County nurse, Child Care Resource and Referral and her college professor.

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On 04/30/25 I had a collateral phone contact with Jordan Jackson from the Department of Health and Human Services. He states he was contacted by Muhammad Shehata and informed they were having problems downloading the video footage so he was going to the center tomorrow to watch the footage.

On 05/02/25 at 10:12 am I sent Robin Smith a text message since she was not at the center. I asked her about the report that the center did not have enough staff and she told staff to put all the children in one room and figure it out.

On 05/02/25 at 10:23 am I made a collateral phone contact with Muhammad Shehata, the CEO of Little Stars Childcare Center. I informed him of the reported concern for ratios on this date. Mr. Shehata states three or four staff members called in this morning unable to work. He states he sent a message to parents to Procare about an hour ago asking them to keep their children home if possible and to pick their children up if possible.

I asked Mr. Shehata if he was able to review video footage for ratios. He stated the infant room was out of ratio for approximately fifteen minutes on one of the dates, but not the other date,

On 05/02/25 at 10:30 am I received a phone call from Robin Smith, the director. She states she is not at the center and the allegation of her telling staff members to put all the children in one room and figure it out is a lie. She states Necey Muhammad and Muhammad Shehata made that comment. She states Necey is responsible for scheduling and making sure rooms are in ratio. Ms. Smith informed me she was quitting as the director immediately. She is not going to let the center and lies ruin her good name.

On 05/02/25 at 11:01 am I returned a call to Ashley N. She had text me earlier, asking me to call her. Ashley states she had called because several staff members had called in and she was not sure what the center should do. She states Muhammad Shehata told them to combine the children and she told him they could not do that per licensing standards. She states she has not talked to Robin Smith because she was not at the center. Ashley states she and Necey were the only two staff members at the center and they started turning families away. They have not been out of ratio and they did not combine children. Ashley states Mr. Shehata sent a message to parents through Procare to pick children up or not bring them to the center about five to ten minutes ago. It should be noted this was not when Mr. Shehata informed me, he sent the message.

On 05/05/25 I received a collateral email from Jordan Jackson. He informed me he was unable to watch any video recording from the center. They told him they did not have enough memory and the video was no longer available.

Special Notes and Action Required:

109.8(2)-Ratio maintained in center as required by age. VIOLATED. There are two verified incidents when the infant room was out of ratio. This cannot occur. If you cannot maintain ratio, you must send children home or close the room. You also may not combine all the children in one room. Children under the age of 18 months cannot be in the same room with children two and older. The infant room ratio is 1:4. Children ages 18 months through three-years old can be combined with a ratio of 1:7. Children ages three through five-years-old can be combined with a ratio of 1:12.

109.12(2)a-d. Discipline does not allow for corporal punishment; punishment that causes humiliation, fear, pain or discomfort. Discipline does not allow for punishment or threat of punishment associated with a child's illness, lack of progress in toilet training, or in connection with food or rest. Punishment which is humiliating or frightening or causes pain or discomfort is not allowed. NOT VIOLATED. There is not evidence to support the child was injured due to discipline at the center.

109.10(10). Policies and procedures for incidents involving minor injuries, minor changes in health status, or behavioral concerns are reported to parent on day of incident. A written report, fully documenting every incident, shall be provided to the parent or person authorized to remove the child from the center. The written report shall be prepared by the staff members who observed the incident and a copy shall be retained in the child's file. VIOLATED. The center sent the child home for what they reported they thought was a rash. They required a doctor's note for the child to return. This is considered a change in health status and an incident report should have been completed and provided to the family at pick-up.

Currently, the status of the center's license is unchanged. If you would like to respond to this report, please do so in writing and I will include the information in the licensing file.

Consultant's Signature:

Rebecca Frost

Date:

05-20-2025