

CHILD CARE CENTER COMPLAINT

Name of Center:	New Horizon Academy - Cottingham & Butler	Enrollment:	103	License ID:	52891		
Street:	799 Locust St	City:	Dubuque	IA Zip Code:	52001	County:	Dubuque
Mailing Address:	3405 Annapolis Lane N Ste 100						
Mailing City:	Plymouth	IA Zip Code:	55447				
Director's Name:	Christina Berger	Center Phone Number:	563-216-1254				
On-Site Supervisors:	E-Mail Address: 3011@nhacademy.net						

Date of Complaint: 02-06-2026**Date of Visit:** 02-11-2026☐ 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:**

It is alleged that in the morning on 2/6/26 the center was out of ratio with as many as 17 to 20 three to five year old children with one staff. When management came to take some children, two staff took six children, leaving one staff still out of ratio with 13 children. This was observed in the open area space on the second floor and then when the staff took the children to their regular room.

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.

Inspection Findings:

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The center was visited on 2/11/26 to discuss the reported concerns with the center director, Christina Berger, assistant director, Dori Wasserburger, and other staff. All were familiar with the date and time in question.

109.8(2) Ratio maintained in center as required.

Christina stated the center had three staff call in that they would not be at work on the morning of 2/11/26. Christina stated staff Amy opens the center in the large multipurpose space ("great room") on the second floor gathering children age three through five. Christina discussed that one of the preschool rooms was not ready for use that morning, and Christina was tasked with preparing the room.

Christina described that another staff arrived and that many children started arriving all at once. Christina described taking some children along with that second staff to one of the preschool rooms. Camera footage was reviewed during this visit, and it appears Amy was left out of ratio for not quite two minutes at this instance. Dori stated then after Amy went to one of the preschool rooms with a group of children, Amy sent a message at 8:40am to the center's group messaging feed that she was out of ratio with 13 children. Dori stated staff Jorie, who was in the room next door, replied to the group feed at 8:44am for Amy to send someone over to her room, but that did not happen. Dori stated Dori was not able to get to the room until 8:52am at which time Dori stated she stayed in the room until the children were finished with breakfast and children were then divided up appropriately. The three staff who were spoken to, each individually, corroborated the information provided and stated the call-ins that morning definitely complicated the normal opening procedures. Staff Amy stated she was not really sure how long she was out of ratio with 13 children because she did not realize it until she was set up for breakfast. She stated it was probably about 20 minutes. Another staff stated she had been out of ratio on the morning of this visit with 12 children age two and three years for about five to 10 minutes and that this happens frequently in the morning, anywhere from five to 15 minutes. The center is cited with regard to this report because there is sufficient information provided to indicate that there have been times that the center has been out of ratio.

Special Notes and Action Required:

Christina, Dori, and the staff described that the staff either call or text in the group message when they are over ratio and are needing additional staff. The staff stated after they send a message, they just proceed until someone arrives put them in compliance with ratio. This process is not ideal as it leaves rooms out of ratio at least for a few moments, if not longer, during the time it takes for management to receive and respond to those calls/messages. Licensing strongly advises that parents not be allowed to leave their child at the center until the room is in ratio. This was communicated to the center director and the staff who were spoken with at this visit. Staff shall ensure that they know the number of children they are responsible for and the corresponding ratio even at those busier times of the day when children are being dropped off and ratio is changing rapidly. The center director shall communicate these expectations to all staff and ensure there are procedures in place for staff to request additional staffing when it becomes necessary before being out of ratio. Staffing shortages may result in the center not being able to accept children into child care.

Consultant's Signature:

Heidi Hungate

Date:

03-13-2026