Iowa Department of Human Services
CHILD CARE CENTER EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE

Name of Center: AFES Youth Center **Enrollment:** 57 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 17941

Street: 712 3rd ST NW **City:** Fort Dodge Iowa **Zip** 50501 **County:** Webster

Mailing Address: 712 3rd ST NW, Fort Dodge, IA, 50501

Director's Name: Charles Clayton **Phone Number:** 515-955-2969

On-Site Supervisor(s): Shawana Ricklefs **E-Mail:** ourafes@hotmail.com

Date(s) of Visit: 08-04-2025

Licensing Visit X **Unannounced Visit** X **Off Year Visit** **Administrative Change**

LICENSING VISITS

New Application **Re-Application** X **NA**

Signed Application (470-0722) Received **Yes** **No** X **NA** **Date Signed:**

FIRE INSPECTION **State** X **Local** **NA** **Is Fire Inspection Approved?** X **Yes** **No** **NA**

Date Inspected: 09-19-2023

Comments :

LICENSE TYPE: X **Child Care** **Preschool (ages 3-5 meets three hours or less per day)**

Financial Type: Profit X Non-Profit NA

Accredition: Accredited NAEYC NSACA Other X NA

Program Serves: Infants (0-23 mo.) 2 Years X Preschool-Age X School-Age

Get-Well Evening Care Special Needs

SCHEDULE: X Year-round School-Year Summer Only

HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General				281	281
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 09-01-2024 to 09-01-2026
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Raymond Salsbury **Date:** 08-08-2025

I. IF CURRENT LICENSE IS PROVISIONAL, IDENTIFY THE CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

NA

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

An unannounced annual visit was made to the AFES Youth Center on 08-04-25 where I met with the on-site supervisor Shawna Ricklefs as the center director, Charles Clayton, was not available. Both are well qualified for the positions they hold based on their experience and on-going professional development. The program is located in the old Hillcrest Elementary building in Fort Dodge and is operated as a non-profit entity overseen by a board of directors. The program primarily provides after school and summer programming for school age children. There are approximately 57 children that are enrolled in the program served by 16 staff. This facility also acts as a community recreation center providing space for other programs and activities. This includes sports leagues, and other summer programs for older school age children and adolescents but those programs are not included in the licensed programming and were not in operation on the day of my visit. The center does have polices and procedures in place to ensure the supervision of the children in the licensed programming when other groups are present. All aspects of the program subject to Licensing Standards were reviewed during the visit.

The layout of the building and classrooms remains the same as in the prior visit. The center is currently making use of 4 classrooms of the building along the west wing for child programming. The program also makes use of the gymnasium which is in a separate building on the same property. Each classroom has restroom facilities and additional sinks in the room so that children do not need to leave the room. The rooms have a traditional school classroom open floor plan. One room did have a temporary construction within the main classroom that created a smaller room which is used for storage. Each room has a large bank of windows along the exterior walls which provide natural light, ventilation, a view of the outdoors, and also serve as secondary emergency egress. One classroom did have OSB boards covering the windows with the exception of the evacuation window. Access to all exit windows was maintained so that they were clear of any obstruction. There were some maintenance issues such as ceiling tiles that had fallen and a window with safety glass that had fractures but none that created a sharp edge. None of the observed maintenance issues rose to the level of being an immediate safety concern for the children and Shawna did identify that arrangements for repairs to the broken glass pane have been made.

In reviewing each classroom they again remain much the same with the center defining them by age/grade level groups of preschool/younger school age, and older school age children. The toys, materials, and equipment in each classroom was observed to be in good repair and appropriate to the ages of the children attending the program but limited. Shawna did identify that this is intentional as the center maintain larger stores of equipment in other areas which is provided to support the planned curriculum as needed. The curriculum plan uses a general focus theme, but also includes a focus on physical activity/sports, and development of school readiness skills with homework assistance during the school year and math/science worksheets. During the visit the staff in the school age room had a curriculum focus of Baseball and were preparing to engage in a "home-run derby" with the children. In the preschool/younger school age room the teachers and children were engaged in a teacher lead large group activity of practicing handwriting letters and numbers. The center does follow a positive behavior support approach to behavior management using routines and reminders of expected behavior, redirection, and guided problem solving. Ratio was maintained as required in the center.

One issue that was noted was that while the center is licensed to provide care to preschool and school age children there

were infants that were also in attendance. It was identified that these were children of or related to staff. One infant was with Shawna throughout the entire time of the visit and being cared for in the center administrative office. The other was making use of a play pen area of the preschool room with a staff member that was not being counted in ratio providing care to that child. While licensing does require that infants are cared for in an area that is separate from children over 2 years of age, of greater concern is that the center is not licensed for that age group. The center will need to discontinue infant care until such time that the fire marshal has approved a space for occupancy of infants, and the center license has been expanded to provide for infant care.

Good health and safety practices were observed. Good hand washing practices were observed on the day of my visit with staff and children washing their hands as needed. When cleaning staff did wait for children to be out of the immediate area before using cleaning products. One issue that was noted was that when cleaning tables the staff member present used a product in an unmarked sprayer to clean tables. When asked what was in the sprayer another staff identified it as an air freshener. All chemical cleaners do need to be labeled containers with information regarding the manufacturer directions for use, storage, and first aid warnings present either on the container or readily available in the classroom. Medications are stored in a locked cabinet in the center office. Documentation is maintained for children that receive medications. The center has policies for obtaining allergy plans for all identified allergies and maintains that information the emergency contacts notebook that is present in each classroom. First aid kits were present and while those in classrooms needed to be replenished the center did have a larger kit near the program office with the materials necessary to address most common first aid needs. I was able to observe staff providing care to a child that developed bleeding blisters on both feet and the staff did follow good practices both in the treatment and documentation of those injuries.

The center has an outdoor playground that consists of a large open space with a paved area, and a grassy area. There are no climbing structures present on the playground. The space is partially fenced. Shade is provided by the building and mature trees along the edges of the playground. The center does have balls, toys, and other materials that can be taken out to the playground. In addition to the outdoor playground area the center has access to a large gymnasium space that the children can use when weather conditions do not allow for outdoor play.

The center does have a full kitchen area where meals can be prepared on-site. Good food storage practices were generally observed. The center has several refrigerators and freezers and each had a thermometer present to ensure proper cold holding temperatures. There were some items that had been stored in the refrigerator that were not labeled as to the date placed in storage or the contents as required but most items were properly labeled. Good storage practices were observed for dry pantry items. The kitchen was observed to be clean. While the center did have traps and other control methods present for common household pests there was no evidence of significant insect or rodent infestation. A copy of the menu was posted and identified a good variety of credible meal options. Lunch was being served on the day of the visit and was consistent with the planned meal. The staff serving the meals did wear food service gloves and used measured scoops to portion meals.

In reviewing administrative records all required notices were present, and were posted at several notice boards throughout the center. The center does have all families complete new enrollment forms for all children each year at the start of programming. A random sample of approximately 25% of the child files were reviewed and all were found to contain all required documentation. There were children who had identified allergies where the parents had not yet returned the allergy response plans for those children and the center does need to be vigilant about obtaining those from parents. In reviewing staff files the center did have a self-audit form to identify what information was present and what was needed for staff files. The self-audit was found to be generally accurate when compared to randomly selected files and the discrepancies that were found were actually in favor of the center with documentation present that had not yet been logged to the self-audit. The self-audit did identify 3 staff that needed an updated Iowa SING background check, and all staff needing annual professional development training for those that have been at the center for more than 1 year. Shawna did state that staff have completed on-going training but she had not yet had an opportunity to upload those certificates into the I-Power Training Registry. She also identified that the center would be closing for a period prior to the start of school to allow for staff to engage in deep cleaning of classrooms, and training. All required inspection logs and certificates were current and available. The center does have several center owned vehicles used for transportation and does maintain service records to show that they are in good working order.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The center has a very strong outreach with the community and having a specific focus of serving at need individuals. This includes engaging in fund raising projects to help the center, and programs to help families. One example is the center also maintains a Food Pop-Up program that is open the community where donations are received and then on certain days are made available to the general public, as well as being able to provide food boxes on an emergency basis.

IV. IDENTIFY THE ASPECTS OF OPERATION THAT FALL BELOW THE STANDARDS REVIEWED:

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.
-- Number not in compliance: 3

109.7(2): Center directors and all staff have the required contact hours of training.
-- Number not in compliance: 6

109.12(4)a: A safe and properly equipped area is provided for infants that does not allow for intrusion by children over two years of age.Children over age two who remain in the infant area are placed at the recommendation of a physician or AEA due to a significant developmental delay. Children are placed for a limited time with HHS approval if doing so does not pose a threat to the infants.
-- The center had infants present that were identified as children of staff and one of which was being cared for in the preschool programming classroom. The center will either need to discontinue infant care, or become licensed to provide care to that age group.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

A full license will remain in effect at this time at this time. Please provide a written response to the licensing consultant identifying a plan of action to correct those aspects cited as not meeting licensing standards and identifying an anticipated date of compliance.

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