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

Name of Center: The Whistle Stop Academy **Enrollment:** 128 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 16831

Street: 103 Campus Dr **City:** Huxley Iowa **Zip** 50124 **County:** Story

Mailing Address: PO Box 84, Huxley, IA, 50124

Director's Name: Keri Alleman/Amy Vandenburg **Phone Number:** 515-597-3637

On-Site Supervisor(s): Janelle Fitzwater **E-Mail:** whistlestop@huxcomm.net

Date(s) of Visit: 07-22-2024

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

LICENSING VISITS

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

Signed Application (470-0722) Received X **Yes** **No** **NA** **Date Signed:** 06-02-2021

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

Date Inspected: 02-13-2023

Comments : Fire inspections are due at least every three years; Fire Marshall set to visit 7/25/24.

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

Financial Type: X Profit Non-Profit NA

Accredition: Accredited NAEYC NSACA Other X NA

Program Serves: X Infants (0-23 mo.) X 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	26	18	40	42	126
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 08-01-2023 to 08-01-2025
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Maggie Gibson, SWIV **Date:** 08-05-2024

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

N/A.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

An unannounced off-year annual visit was completed 7/22/24; Amy Vandenburg was present for the visit.

The Whistle Stop Academy first opened in 1995. In 2000, they moved into the current building that was built specifically for child care. Keri Alleman is the owner and the co-director with Amy. Keri has a Bachelor's Degree and first started working in child care in 1987. She has owned The Whistle Stop Academy since 1995. The co-director is Amy Vandenburg. She has a degree in Elementary Education with an Early Childhood and Reading Endorsement. She started working part time at the center in 2006, and became full time in 2010. Janelle Fitzwater is the on-site supervisor. All meet qualifications for their roles.

The Whistle Stop Academy provides traditional daycare for newborn up to 12 years of age; which includes before and after school care, and preschool (including universal preschool partnered with the local school) for approximately 149 (which is the total enrollment, some are part time). The Center is the sole occupant of the building; which was built for to provide daycare services.

All areas of the program were observed. These areas observed consisted of classroom observations and activities, nutritional practices, health and safety practices, playground observation, field trip and transportation practices, and administrative review.

Room Observations: This center uses creative curriculum/gold standard for lesson planning; and the bright wheel application to communicate with parents. All classrooms offered a variety of age/developmentally appropriate centers/toys. The rooms are nicely arranged and staff were in ratio--maintaining good structure in the rooms. Good hand washing took place by staff and children. The center uses oxivir for sanitizing. Handwashing posters were hung.

Nutrition:
This center has an on-site kitchen and dedicated cook with menus that reflect adherence to CACFP guidelines. The children do come to the kitchen/cafeteria area to have meals; that are served by staff/center cook. The kitchen had posted menus with seasonal rotation for menu items. The storage was clean and orderly, as was the refrigeration. No expired or spoiled food items were observed.

Health and Safety:
Medication at the center is stored securely. The center has stocked first aid supplies. Emergency Plans were conspicuously posted and drills were documented to have been completed with the exception of Nov 2023 (but this could be due to a change in protocol for documentation per Amy). Radon was completed in June 2022 in all of the rooms and the kitchen and fell below the the recommended max. The HVAC system is inspected in the fall and spring, and there was a new HVAC system installed in the fall of 2022. There are carbon dioxide detectors in use with battery back-ups. Restrooms located through out the building were clean and had the necessary sanitary items.

Playground:

This center offers four playgrounds, divided by ages for use. All four playground areas had artificial rubber turf that was in good condition. There was ample shade and space available along with a plethora of outdoor activities available. There are shade structures and the children are offered "water days" in the summer.

Transportation/field trips:
The center has several smaller buses used for transportation; and some staff have obtained a chauffer's license also. The center does contract with a mechanic to maintain the vehicles. The day of the visit the children were in between coming back from a pool visit and another activity.

Administrative Records:
This center had conspicuously posted mandatory reporter information, provides ready access to handbooks, consultant contact, license, emergency exit plans and non-smoking signs. Eight child files were reviewed with one missing emergency dental information; Five staff files were reviewed; one staff needing to repeat mandatory reporter training and three with physicals completed outside the assigned time (upon hire or within six months PRIOR to hire). It should be noted that the same three staff did provide physical forms when completed.

This center has a long-standing policy and handbook, that is readily accessible to parents and employees.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The center maintains high enrollment and there are many long-term staff at this center, including staff who have worked at the center for 20 years, 3 staff at 15 years and staff at 4 years. The staff in each room were observed to work as a "team" environment to assure the children in their care get their needs met.

This center is able to provide care for urgent needs such as for families offering family foster care or other emergent, unforeseen circumstances.

The staff work well together as a team and have strong communication.

Their cook has been with them since 2002, and she is very much a part of the staff and the kitchen is her classroom.

The center has a strong reputation in the community.

This center makes good use of their room; consistently offering a variety of centers/activities to the children in each room. The rooms were tidy and staff were observed to be actively involved in activities with the children/responsive to the children. The children appeared content and there was good structure provided in the rooms.

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

109.9(1)d: All files contain a pre-employment physical exam report completed within six months prior to hire and at least every three years. Physical exams shall be documented on form 470-5152, Child Care Provider Physical Examination Report.
Number not in compliance: 3
Physical exam require six months PRIOR to hire or every three years.

109.9(1)e: All files contain documentation to indicate that ongoing staff training requirements are met, including current certifications in first aid/CPR and mandatory child abuse training.
Number not in compliance: 1

109.9(2)b: All files contain sufficient information and authorization to allow the center to secure emergency medical and dental services at any time child is in center’s care.
Number not in compliance for dental: 1
Information lacking: missing emergency contact information for child's dentist.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Radon testing is required every two years. The center last completed radon testing in June of 2022. All rooms fell below the 4.0 cutoff.

The furnace is inspected annually; there was a new unit installed in fall of 2022.

This center had consistently tidy rooms with all staff engaged in responding to the needs of the children in each room. The center offers a good choice of indoor activities for each age and ample outdoor play space as well.

*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.