Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Newton Early Learning Academy

Provider No.: 49974

Address: 2713 N 4th AVE E, Newton, IA, 50208

County: Jasper

Director's Name: Melissa Strand

On-Site Supervisor:

Phone Number: 6417872002

E-Mail: thenelafamily@gmail.com

HHS Visit Date: 09/22/2025

Licensing Period:

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 03/22/2024

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

- [ ] PTO
- [X] Licensing Visit
- [ ] Drop In
- [ ] Administrative Change

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

Quality Rating: 1

- [ ] Accrediation

Program Duration:

- [X] Year-Round
- [ ] School Year
- [ ] Summer Only

Health and Human Services

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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	20	17	27	25	89
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

The Newton Early Learning Academy opened in November 2018. The center is located in a single standing building. The center has security cameras in classrooms and the entryway. The center serves children ages infancy through school age. The owners of the center are Paloma and Jeffrey Keith. Melissa Strand is the director.

An unannounced visit was completed on today's date. All areas subject to HHS licensing rules were reviewed. Mandatory postings are in place at the center's entrance. Schedules and lesson plans, are posted in the classrooms.

Jennifer Smithart assisted with today's visit The infant class had three infants present. There were two staff in the classroom during part of the visit and three staff during part of the visit. There were three toddlers in the 1's classroom. There was one staff working in this classroom. The 2's classroom had six children in attendance. One staff was working with this age group. The preschool room had five children present. One staff was working in this classroom. Children were observed in classrooms. Children were observed during lunch time, while resting and during child directed play activities.

The center has a full kitchen. The center serves breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack. Lunch served today was threaded spaghetti (hot dogs and noodles), broccoli and cauiflower, pineapples and milk. Menus are on a weekly rotation. Menus reviewed showed compliance with CACFP requirements.

The center has a playground that has fencing. There is grass and concrete in the outdoor play area. The center has completed monthly playground checks. The center is also able to use the Head Start playground.

The center doesn't provide transportation.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

The current director worked at the daycare prior to being promoted to director. The director has worked with the center's CCR&R consultant. The center participates in IQ4K and has a one star rating.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

109.7(1): All staff (within first three months of employment):Iowa’s training for the mandatory reporting of child abuse.At

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least one hour of training regarding universal precautions.Certification in First Aid infant, child, and adult cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) or equivalent certification approved by the Department. A valid certificate indicating the date of training and expiration date shall be maintained.Certification in infant, child, and adult first aid that uses a nationally recognized curriculum or is received from a nationally recognized training organization including the American Red Cross, American Heart Association, American Safety and Health Institute, or MEDIC First Aid or an equivalent certification approved by the Department. A valid certificate indicating the date of training and expiration date shall be maintained.Minimum health and safety trainings, (Essentials) approved by the Department. If significant changes occur to content, the Department may require the training be renewed.
Two staff haven't completed CPR/First Aid training in the required time frame.

109.9(1)a: All files contain:Copy of a department criminal history record check form or any other permission form approved by Department of Public Safety for conducting an Iowa or national criminal history record checkCopy of a request for child abuse information form, when applicable.Copies of results of Iowa record checks conducted through the SING for review by the department upon request.Copies of national criminal history check results.Any department issued documents sent to the center related to a record check, regardless of findings.

109.9(2)d: 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.
Two children's files that were reviewed were missing dentist information.

109.10(3): Infectious disease control: Centers shall establish policies and procedures related to infection disease control and use of universal precautions with handling of bodily fluid. Soiled diapers shall be stored in containers separate from other waste.
Diapers were being placed in a small trash can that didn't have a lid. The trash can was being used for all trash for the classroom and was placed on top of the counter in the 1's classroom.
There was a large trash can with a lid in the storage closet in the 1's classroom. This trash can was placed by the changing table during the visit and staff were told to use this trash can for diapers.

109.12(4)e: The provider shall follow safe sleep practices for infants under one year of age:Infants shall always be placed on their backs for sleep.Infants shall be placed on a firm mattress with a tight fitted sheet.Infants shall not be allowed to sleep on a bed, sofa, air mattress or other soft surface.No child shall be allowed to sleep in any item not designed for infant sleeping, including but not limited to an infant seat, car seat, swing, or bouncy seat.No toys, soft objects, stuffed animals, pillows, bumper pads, blankets, or loose bedding shall be allowed in the sleeping area with the infant.No co-sleeping shall be allowed.Sleeping infants shall be actively observed by sight and sound.If an alternate sleeping position is needed, a signed physician or physician assistant authorization with statement of medical reason is required and an expiration date.
REPEAT VIOLATION
An infant was sleeping in a bouncy seat. It is believed the infant was in the bouncy seat for an extended time period today also as the infant was seen awake at the beginning of the visit and then the infant was sleeping later in the visit which was a couple hours later. The staff who assisted with the visit today said infant staff had been addressed earlier this week with that same infant being in a bouncy seat for too much time.

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

The center was required to complete a Corrective Action Plan to address violations found during the visit. A copy of the Corrective Action Plan has been uploaded in the center's file.
The center has been in violation of infants sleeping in bouncy seats in prior licensing reports. This is a repeat violation.

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

A four month old infant sleeping in a bouncy seat. Staff stated she does sleep in there at times. This worker had concerns as the infant was observed being awake in the bouncy seat at the beginning of the visit and then sleeping in the same bouncy seat towards the end of the visit. Jennifer said she had just talked with the staff about that infant spending too much time in a bouncy seat. The infant classroom had two ball pits, which are not allowed to be used in centers. They are a safety risk, due to potential suffocation and difficulty in cleaning and sanitizing these ball pits. The ball pits have been removed from the classroom. These concerns are being addressed in the Corrective Action Plan.

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Violations cited today were addressed. All bouncy seats have been removed from the infant classroom which addresses some immediate concerns. The director is checking into some relevant training for infant staff to participate in.

The center has a full license at this time.

Note: If you are the Child Care Center Director and you feel something is unclear or unjustly cited, please contact me (phone 515-362-7823; email melinda.larson@hhs.iowa.gov) so that we may discuss the issue. If necessary, I can make a notation in your record. You may also send a letter that will be included in your licensing file noting any disagreement you may have with this report. If you have the need for any additional information discussed during my visit, please contact me and I will forward the information to you. Thank you.

*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.

Date: 09/24/2025

HHS Licensing Consultant: Melinda Larson, Child Care Licensing Consultant

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**.