Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Elkader Childcare and Learning Center

Provider No.: 19203

Address: 117 Gunder RD, Elkader, IA, 52043

County: Clayton

Director's Name: Calista Morris

On-Site Supervisor: Calista Morris

Phone Number: 5632453333

E-Mail: ecclc03@alpinecom.net

HHS Visit Date: 04/29/2025

Licensing Period: 06/01/2024 to 06/01/2026

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 04/13/2023

Comments: Compliance on 04/03/24

Report Visit Type:

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

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

- [ ] Accrediation

Program Duration:

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

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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	16	21	42	21	100
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

On 04/29/25 I made an unannounced off year licensing visit to Elkader Childcare and Learning Center. I met with Jody Krugger, the director. She started at the center in September 2006 and became the director in March 2013. Ms. Krugger has a diploma in an unrelated field. She is a NAEYC member and an IAAEYC member. Lynda Schaefers is in charge when Ms. Krugger is away from the center. There are fifteen staff members employed by the center.

The center is in a free-standing building. The program operates Monday through Friday from 6:00 am until 6:00 pm. The center provides care to infants through school-aged children. There are currently 87 children enrolled in the childcare center.

The center operates out of the following rooms: infant, infant 2 (one-year-olds), toddlers (two-year-olds), three-year-olds through school-age room and there is a preschool room. Windows provide natural lighting. The rooms are decorated with pictures of the children, the children's art projects, and posters to assist the children with the learning process, such as the alphabet, shapes, colors and numbers. The children's birthdays were posted. There is an area for circle time.

The centers observed on the day of the licensing visit include library, Lego/blocks, table toys, games, puzzles, transportation, computers, art, Play-Doh, dramatic play, listening, writing, math, science/discovery, woodworking, sensory table and music. Centers were arranged in a manner that allowed easy movement between activities, but it also allowed for clear supervision by staff members. Materials were in good condition. The materials are located at child level, so they were easily accessible to the children.

A variety of resources are used in the rooms to create lesson plans. Teachers develop their own lesson plans and activities are based on themes. The length of the theme depends on the children's interest level but generally last a week. None of the rooms had lesson plans available for review. Lesson plans are mandated in each of the classrooms. These must be done prior to the start of the day to show a plan of activities for the children for the day. Lesson plans must be posted and available for review.

There was a phone with emergency numbers and the center's address and phone number posted in each of the classrooms. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and evacuation diagrams were posted by the main program doors and outdoor exits throughout the center. A daily schedule was posted in each room.

The center is using Brightwheel to complete daily sheets. Brightwheel does not have an area to document the child's mood each day. This is a required area to document for children under the age of two so I would recommend documenting it under "Notes".

There are bathrooms and changing tables throughout the center. In the preschool room you must post the handwashing

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procedures near both sinks in the room. This was cited in last year's report also.

The center participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The children receive breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack. Meals are prepared on-site by Sami Lee; the full time cook. The children eat in their rooms. Family style is not being used. Ms. Lee is making a new menu each week but plans to start using a six week rotation of menus. Menus are posted in the Brightwheel app Dishes are washed using the three-step method. There are two refrigerators and a chest freezer. Thermometers were present. The Crosley refrigerator needs to be cleaned. This was cited in last year's report also. Food items were stored according to NHSPS guidelines.

Infant room staff members report that parents provide everything until the children start table food. There is a small refrigerator for the infant room in the adjoined storage room. A thermometer could not be found in the freezer. There is a refrigerator in the Infant 2 room and thermometers were present.

Bottles and dishes are being washed in the Orange (infants) and Blue (one-year-olds) rooms and they are not sanitizing the bottles or dishes. This is mandated. They must either use the three-step method in the classrooms or send the bottles and dishes to the kitchen to be cleaned and sanitized.

The center uses bleach and water to sanitize the food tables and disinfect the changing tables.

I observed or discussed diaper changes with the staff members. In the infant room the staff members are not washing the children's hands with soap and water following the diaper change. This must always occur. Additionally, they are not cleaning the changing table with soap and water prior to disinfecting the table. This must always occur.

Mats and cribs are used to nap. There was an infant in the crib that was swaddled using a Halo sleep slack. This cannot occur. Restrictive devices, such as swaddling, are not allowed in the cribs.

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. I reviewed documentation of monthly playground inspections.

A radon test was completed in May 2022 and is good for five years. The results were within the EPA guidelines.

The annual fuel burning inspection was completed and no concerns were noted. A carbon monoxide detector was present and located in the entrance near the bathroom. Outlets were covered. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 04/13/23, with compliance on 04/03/24.

The parent information is located inside the entrance. The mandatory reporter, childcare consultant and the handbook availability were posted. The license was conspicuously hung. A no-smoking sign was posted at the entrance.

There are three separate fenced in areas. The largest area is in the back of the childcare center, and it provides a large grassy area for the children. There are natural hills that provide great entertainment during the winter months with sleds. There is a slide built into the hill. There is also a sandbox, riding toys, balls and a picnic table. There is a gazebo and trees that provides shade. There are benches and a picnic table for the children to rest.

The middle area uses pea gravel for surface cushioning and there is also a grassy area. There are stepping stones and a balance beam. There is also a sandbox, a woodworking center and trucks for the children to play with. Trees provide shade.

The third area is in the front of the childcare center. There are rubber tiles for surface cushioning and a cemented area for riding toys and sidewalk chalk. Helmets are used. There is climbing equipment with a slide and other activities. There are benches available for the children to rest. Trees provide shade.

Staff members were great at multi-tasking and working as a team. I visited toward the end of nap and I observed children on the floor with the children and they were rubbing their backs and holding the children. A sound machine was playing in several rooms while children napped to relax them. In the room where the children were awake, the staff members were on the floor actively engaged with the children and reading them books. Staff members were enthusiastic while reading. The story was about how they should treat others and the staff member included the children in the story by asking them questions on how they would treat others. The children appeared to enjoy their time at the center.

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2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

Ms. Krugger states the center has a waiting list.

Ms. Krugger states they have a great Board of Directors.

Ms. Krugger states their Preschool Readiness program has been successful.

The program is in a secured building.

The center is a bus stop for preschool and school-aged children.

Participating in the Community Partner Program allows the center to invest in the following capital improvements: Finish flooring project; replace or maintain the furnace; replace roof (in 2026); upgrade or repair playground equipment; payoff building loan; replace toilets.

Participating in the Community Partner Program helps the center provide the following for the children: rest time mats; cubbies for the children's items; updated shelving; update first aid kits; purchase new curriculum.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

109.12(1): Program structure that uses developmentally appropriate practices and written program of activities planned to the developmental needs of children served.Program complements but does not duplicate school curriculum.Schedule of program is posted in a place visible to parents.

109.12(1)a: Program provides a curriculum or program of activities that promotes self-esteem and positive self-image, social interaction, self-expression and communication, creative expression, and problem-solving skills.

109.12(5)b: Infants diapered in a sanitary manner as needed in central diapering area.One changing table for every 15 infants/toddlers needing diaper changes.Diapering, sanitation, and handwashing procedures posted and implemented in central diapering area.
Additional concerns: In the infant room the staff members are not washing the children's hands with soap and water following the diaper change. This must always occur. Additionally, they are not cleaning the changing table with soap and water prior to disinfecting the table. This must always occur.

109.15(5)b: Sanitary and safe methods in food preparation, serving, and storage sufficient to prevent transmission of disease, infestation, and spoilage are followed.Staff preparing food that have injuries on hands wear protective gloves.Staff serving food use clean serving utensils and have clean hands/wear protective gloves.
Additional concerns: The refrigerator must be cleaned. This was cited in last year's report also.

109.15(5)c: Sanitary methods are used for dishwashing sufficient to prevent transmission of disease.
Additional concerns: Bottles and dishes are being washed in the Orange (infants) and Blue (one-year-olds) rooms and they are not sanitizing the bottles or dishes. This is mandated. They must either use the three-step method in the classrooms or send the bottles and dishes to the kitchen to be cleaned and sanitized.

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

N/A

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

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A full license is issued for the remainder of the licensing period. All DHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period.

An administrative change is being made to name Calista Morris as the new director. She started on 05/26/26. Jody Krugger is no longer with the program.

Date: 06/05/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Becky Frost

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**.