Health and Human Services

# Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

## CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Little Cougar Playhouse & Discovery Preschool

Provider No.: 22283

Address: 609 S Monroe, Wellsburg, IA, 50680

County: Grundy

Director's Name: Amy Weichers

On-Site Supervisor: Deb Saul

Phone Number: 6418693773

E-Mail: aweichers@agwsr.org lcp@agwsr.org

HHS Visit Date: 10/21/2025

Licensing Period: 11/01/2025 to 11/01/2027

**Fire Inspection:**

Date Inspected: 04/30/2024

Comments:

**Report Visit Type:**

- [ ] PTO
- [X] Licensing Visit
- [ ] Drop In
- [ ] 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 | 21 | 24 | 25 | 22 | 92 |
| Summer | | | | | 0 |

**1. Basic Overview**

An unannounced annual visit was made to the Little Cougar Playhouse & Discovery Preschool on 10-21-25 where I met with center director Amy Wiechers, and on-site supervisor Deb Saul. Amy has been the director of a sister program in Ackley and took on the oversight of this program in 2018 and is now acting as an executive director over both centers. Deb became the on-site supervisor of this program in 2019. Both are well qualified for the positions they hold based on their experience in early childhood care/education, and on-going professional development. This program is located in the elementary school in Wellsburg and provides daycare and preschool programming to infants through school age children. The preschool programming does include both a formal 3 and 4 year old preschool class. The 4 year old class is operated under the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program. The 3 year old preschool program is operated under the DHHS License. There are 87 children enrolled in the program with 12 in the 4 yoa preschool, and 14 in the 3 yoa preschool. All aspects of the program subject to licensing standards were reviewed during the visit.

The overall layout of the center and programming remains the same as in prior visits however there was a change for the formal preschool class which moved to a new classroom. The program makes use of 5 classrooms with one being a designated formal preschool classroom. The majority of the classrooms are located in a single wing of the building which is separated from the classrooms used by the school. The designated preschool classroom is located in another wing of the building. As noted this class moved to a new classroom that has an entry room for coat cubbies which also has restrooms and a door that opens to corridor next to a direct exit to the outdoor playground. The room was estimated to be 40 ft x 27 ft determined by the tiles used in the suspended ceiling. This would provide a useable floor space 1080 sq.ft. allowing for a capacity of 30 children though the program typically caps enrollment at a lower number of children. In addition the sinks in the restrooms there is an additional sink in the classroom to facilitate hand washing. Windows along the exterior wall provide ample natural light and a view of the outdoors.

Each room of the daycare space has a large bank of windows along the exterior walls that provide ample natural light, a view of the outdoors, and ventilation. Each classroom has a secondary exit that either provides direct access to to the outdoors, or connects to another classroom. All exits were clear of obstruction and opened easily and freely. Each classroom has restroom facilities directly accessible from the programming space so that children do not need to leave the room. Each room has additional sinks available in the classroom to facilitate hand washing. During the visit it was noted that the sinks have independent heating units and these did need to be adjusted as the unit in the 2 year old room had a measured temperature of 131.5 deg F, and the sink in the infant room had a measured temperature of 128.5 deg F. which can result in instant scald burns. Water temperatures need to be adjusted so that they do not exceed 120 deg. F. when measured at the spigot with only the hot water tap turned on. Other maintenance issues were also observed with light switch in the restroom of the preschool classroom observed to have a missing cover plate on a light switch allowing direct access to the wiring, and ceiling tiles that were missing and need to be replaced. Activity centers are created in the classrooms through the placement of furniture, shelving, and play structures. It was noted that the infant room is divided in to a play area and

sleeping/feeding area through the use of low shelving and the changing station and is accessed by a gate. During the visit staff were observed to step over the shelves used as a barrier and it was reviewed that this cannot be allowed as it does create a significant safety risk of staff tripping and either dropping a child, dropping an item on a child, or falling on a child. The arrangement in each classroom is such that there were no blind areas but with the divided infant room staff should be positioned in the sleeping area when children are sleeping. The toys and materials in each activity center were observed to be in good repair and appropriate to the ages of the children in the classrooms.

**2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program**

Good interactions were observed on the day of my visit in each of the classrooms. A copy of the daily schedule and curriculum were posted in each classroom and the staff were following them. This included the teachers moving the children through activities such as large group teacher lead presentations, individual center play, lunch service, and other activities. Each of the classrooms were following a general theme focus related to Halloween and the toys, materials, and craft activities were reflective of this. During the visit the teachers were all actively engaged with the children either presenting large or small group teacher lead activities, or joining the children as they engaged in self-directed center play. Each of the teachers appeared to have a very positive and energetic attitude, and used calm and positive tones when speaking to the children. The teachers also used effective proactive behavior management techniques of routines, reminders, positive recognition, and simple redirection with the children. This resulted in the children appearing to enjoy their time at the center and have positive relationships with the teachers, and no observed behavioral concerns. Ratio was maintained in each classroom as required by age.

Good health and safety policies and practice were observed during the visit. I was able to observe a diaper change during the time of the visit and staff did follow the established procedures. There were no children currently taking prescription medications but over the counter (OTC) medications were present and were properly labeled and stored. One issue that was noted was a prescription acetaminophen medication which was past the printed expiration date, and for a child that the staff identified had moved to another classroom. While the medication was prescribed "as needed" staff do need to ensure that all medications are properly maintained so that they are available to the children for whom they are for, and are replaced when expired or verified with a pharmacist that they are still viable to be administered. Chemical cleaners, personal belongings, and other items that could pose a safety risk to children were stored in areas where they were not readily accessible. The classroom teachers did follow good cleaning practices with sanitizing tables before and after meals. When using chemical cleaners the staff did direct the children to other areas of the room. Safe sleep practices were followed on the day of my visit but it was noted that one infant had a pacifier with a ribbon clip attached. This was removed when pointed out to staff. One other issue that was noted was a crib that had loose hardware and while not in use at the time of the visit does need to be repaired prior to being used.

The playground is located in an inner courtyard area and is divided into several areas by chain link fencing. The daycare children only make use of two areas one of which one is used for the infants and toddlers. That playground space has a grassy area, and an area with a unitary pour in place fall surfacing where children can ride tricycles and play with balls and other toys. The other playground space used by the daycare has a small climbing structure which was observed to be in good repair. Pea gravel is used for fall surfacing in this area and has developed a hard pan layer which will need to be maintained either by aerating, or adding more material. Use of climbing structures needs to be limited until such time that the fall surfacing issues have been corrected. Shade is limited to that which is provided by the building and play structure. The center does need to explore options to provide additional shade with options including planting trees, constructing a shade structure, or use of awnings or portable shade structures. There is a shed where other toys and materials are stored and all of the equipment was observed to be in good repair.

The program does have a small kitchen area and meals are prepared on site. A menu is posted which does identify a good variety of nutritious meal options. Good food storage practices were observed for both dry pantry and refrigerated items though a thermometer does need to be placed in the refrigerator, and prior spilled items need to be cleaned. The kitchen was clean with no evidence of any insect or rodent infestation. I was able to observe the lunch service during the visit. Staff wear food service gloves, and use measured scoops when serving meals. The children eat in the classrooms and the teachers provide supervision at the tables.

In reviewing administrative records all required notices for No Smoking, License Certificate, Consultant Contact, and Mandatory Abuse Reporting were posted in an area readily accessible and visible to all parents and visitors. Other required

postings for emergency evacuation, emergency contacts, diapering, hand washing, schedule, and curriculum were posted. One issue that was noted is that the evacuation postings were missing the diagram instructions and these do need to be added. The center does maintain a self-audit system to track what information is needed in both child and staff files. When random files were selected for review and compared to the self-audit it was found to be accurate. The self-audit and reviews identified 3 children that needed an updated physical. In addition in reviewing infant daily reports staff were not logging daily activities and disposition as required. The center is using the Playground communication application which does have the functionality to attach photographs and it was reviewed that these could be used as visual depiction of both mood and activity. If the center wishes to follow that practice staff will need to take photos of each child each day both morning and afternoon to show any changes in functioning. In reviewing staff files 2 needed an updated physical and all other documentation was current. All required inspection logs and certificates were current and available.

**3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard**

109.9(1)b: 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: 2. Recent changes to Licensing Standards now allows staff 6 months from the date of hire to obtain a physical and 2 files were not compliant when this applying that rule change.

109.9(3): Daily written records are maintained for each child under two years of age and include: The time periods in which the child has slept. The amount of food consumed and the times at which the child has eaten. The time of and any irregularities in the child's elimination patterns. The general disposition of the child. A general summary of the activities in which the child participated.
-- Documentation of daily activity and disposition was not being maintained as required.

109.10(13)b: Emergency instructions, phone numbers, and diagrams for fire, tornado, and flood shall be visibly posted and documented at least once a month for fire and tornado. Records shall be maintained for current and previous year.
-- Emergency evacuation notices did not have diagram instructions as required.

109.11(3)a: Center shall ensure that:Facility and premises are sanitary, safe, and hazard free.Sufficient lighting shall be provided.Sufficient ventilation.Sufficient heating.Sufficient cooling.Equipment placed in the program area is maintained so as not to result in injury to the children.
-- Hot water temperatures exceeded 120 deg. F at the sinks in the infant, and 2 year old rooms. The cover plate for the light switch of the preschool bathroom was missing allowing direct access to energized electrical wires and needs to be replaced. Missing ceiling tiles need to be replaced. The crib with loose hardware needs to be repaired prior to use. The pea gravel fall surfacing of the outdoor playground needs to be aerated or supplemented to ensure at least 9 inches of loose material.

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

It was verified with the school principal and head of maintenance that the school is responsible to maintain the physical facilities of the building, and playgrounds including repairs and cleaning. The maintenance concerns were identified to the school principal and the head of maintenance. Prior to completing the visit the head of maintenance did confirm that the water heating units of the sinks could not be adjusted and new units had been ordered, and a plate cover for the light switch would also be installed immediately.

**5. Special Notes/Recommendations**

A full license is recommended at this time. Please provide a written response to the licensing consultant identifying a plan of action to correct and maintain those aspects cited as not meeting licensing standards and identifying an anticipated date of compliance. At least one visit will be made to the center during the next year.

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## CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Date: 11/06/2025

HHS Licensing Consultant: Ray Salsbury

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**.