Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: The Learning Tree Childcare Center

Provider No.: 52223

Address: 695 North Street, Lansing, IA, 52151

County: Allamakee

Director's Name: Jenny Cole

On-Site Supervisor: Jenny Cole

Phone Number: 5632869956

E-Mail: thelearningtreeccdirector@gmail.com

HHS Visit Date: 09/23/2025

Licensing Period: 10/01/2025 to 10/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 08/20/2026

Comments:

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

Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

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	27	16	41	40	124
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

On 09/23/25 I made an unannounced licensing visit to The Learning Tree Childcare Center in Lansing. I met with Jenny Cole, the director and lead teacher. Ms. Cole started the program in August 2023. She has a BA in family services and a master's degree in public administration. She has previous experience in a childcare center. Keirsten Mathis is the assistant teacher in the classroom. There are two additional staff members, but both are on leave.

The program was given permission to open on 08/22/23. The program offers a three-year-old preschool class on Tuesday and Thursday. The core hours of the class are 8:10 am until 3:15 pm. Wrap around cared is offered before and after the class so the program hours are 7:00 am until 5:30 pm. There are 13 children enrolled in the program. The program only operates during the school year.

They are operating out of a single classroom in the basement of the public library. I observed the classroom. Windows provide natural lighting and artificial lighting is also used. The room is decorated with pictures of the children and their families and posters to assist the children with the learning process, such as the alphabet and colors. 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, puzzles, transportation, play dough, art, dramatic play, math, science/discovery, magnets, 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 are easily accessible to the children.

The program uses a play-based curriculum and a variety of resources are used to develop lesson plans. Parent-teacher conferences are offered at a minimum of once each year. A permanent assessment portfolio is developed and maintained for each child. A lesson plan was available for review. A daily schedule was posted.

There are two bathrooms and each one has one toilet and one sink and handwashing procedures were posted in both locations. There are additional bathrooms in the building.

The children use mats to nap. The parents are providing the mats for their children. Bedding is stored separately in each child's cubby. It is taken home each week by parents to be washed.

The program is using their personal cell phones. Emergency numbers, that include the poison control phone number and the program's address and phone number were posted. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and an evacuation diagram were posted by the program door.

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. The radon test was completed in August 2025. The results were within recommended EPA guidelines.

The annual fuel burning inspection was completed and no concerns were noted. A carbon monoxide detector was present on Ms. Cole's desk. Outlets were protected. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 08/15/23.

The program is not on the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) but follows the guidelines. The children are given breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. The program provides breakfast and snacks and lunch is provided by the local high school and delivered to the program. Menus were available for review in the classroom. Disposable products are used for breakfast and snacks. Lunch dishes are returned to the school. Families are not charged for food. The program has a refrigerator and a thermometer was present. Food items were stored according to NHSPS guidelines.

The program uses bleach and water to sanitize the food tables.

The program has a first aid kit. Remove the antibiotic packets. You need a medication authorization form to apply this product. It is recommended to wash the injury with soap and water and put a band-aid on it.

The parent information is located on a bulletin board inside the classroom. The mandatory reporter, child care consultant and the handbook availability were posted. The license was conspicuously hung. A no-smoking sign was posted at the entrance. My contact poster is outdated but I have emailed an updated poster with the new HHS website information.

The program has a fenced in grassy area in the front of the classroom. The area is all natural. There is a dirt pile for the children to play in. They have chalk, transportation, dramatic play equipment, blocks and a sensory table. There is no climbing equipment so fall surfacing is not necessary. There is a bench, a chair and a child-sized table and chairs for the children to rest.

Staff and children's files were reviewed at the time of the licensing visit. I reviewed six children files. The immunization certificates were not on the mandated HHS immunization certificate but she has already contacted the childcare nurse consultant and she is going to provide the program with the correct immunizations for the children.

I reviewed two staff files. They were in great condition.

I reviewed policy and procedures, staff and parent handbooks. The necessary written emergency procedures and policies were present. You have a professional development policy but you must update it to state that new employees must complete first aid, CPR, mandatory reporter, universal precautions and Essentials training within 90 days. Emergency Preparedness Plans have been completed.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

The children were engaged in circle time when I arrived. They were dancing and went over class acclamations, teaching the children to talk positively about themselves. The children then went on a walk through town. Ms. Cole and Ms. Mathis were flexible with the schedule. They recognized when children needed space and used positive redirection to get them back on track. Staff members talked with the children about red choices and green choices and using their words to express their feelings. Staff members offered the children choices. The children are learning about the color yellow and the circle shape and they did an art project using yellow paint to make circles on their paper using a lemon. Staff members were enthusiastic and made the classroom a fun learning environment. They provided easy to understand directions and were patient and nurturing.

The program has an IQ4K level of 1 that expires on 07/31/26.

Ms. Cole is expanding and has plans to open a childcare center next year for infants through school age children.

Ms. Cole states the community is supportive and local businesses have made donations.

Ms. Cole states the children are happy and the parents feel safe with their children at the program.

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Ms. Cole states Ms. Mathis is a good team member. Ms. Mathis helps her get organized and she steps up where she is needed.

The program participates in field trips. This month they are going to visit Emplify Health Clinic by Gunderson to learn about the germs and the importance of handwashing.

Ms. Cole provides parents with a detailed monthly newsletter that outlines the theme and lesson plan, activities and field trips, reminders and the menu.

The program provides at least one parent and teacher conference each year and they keep a permanent assessment portfolio on each child.

The preschool program offers scholarships if the family is denied Child Care Assistance.

The preschool program uses the Brightwheel app to communicate with families, attendance and billing.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

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

N/A

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

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.

I met with Ms. Cole following my observations in the classroom. She had a great visit and had no citations. I emailed Ms. Cole an updated contact poster for myself for the parent board.

You have a professional development policy but you must update it to state that new employees must complete first aid, CPR, mandatory reporter, universal precautions and Essentials training within 90 days.

An administrative change is being made to change several things. The location of the center has moved to 695 North Street in Lansing. The fire inspection gave them permission to stat using the space beginning 09/01/26. The new space has a total capacity of 124 children and will serve infants through school-age children. The hours will be 6:30 am until 6:00 pm.

Date: 08/28/2026

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**.