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

Name of Center: TUG's Daycare & Preschool **Enrollment:** 140 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 22036

Street: 950 N Illinois AVE **City:** Mason City Iowa **Zip** 50401 **County:** Cerro Gordo

Mailing Address: 950 N Illinois AVE, Mason City, IA, 50401

Director's Name: Nikole Benson **Phone Number:** 641-424-9023

On-Site Supervisor(s): Sarah Aronsen **E-Mail:** nikolebenson@ymail.com

Date(s) of Visit: 07-12-2023

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

LICENSING VISITS

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

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

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

Date Inspected: 10-05-2020

Comments :

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	17	35	27	105
Summer					0

QRS Rating: 3

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: Raymond Salsbury **Date:** 07-14-2023

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

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

An unannounced annual visit was made to the Tugs Daycare and Preschool on 07-12-23 where I met with the center director and owner, Nikole Benson. Nikole has been the owner and director of this center since 2011, and the on-site supervisor, Sarah Aronsen has been with the center since 2008. Both are well qualified for the positions they hold with extensive experience and training in early childhood care. The center is located in a free standing building which has been remodeled and added to over the past several years as the program has grown. The center provides daycare and formal preschool programming serving infants through school age children. The center also has a second program providing before and after school care which begins at the school during the school year and then transitions to the center. There are 143 children enrolled in the program. All aspects of the program subject to licensing standards were reviewed during the visit.

The physical facilities and general layout of classrooms remain the same as observed in prior visits. Classrooms are established by age groups with two rooms for infants that are connected by a pass-through area where changing stations and bottle/food preparation is conducted. Each classroom was observed to be clean. There were a few minor maintenance issues noted but nothing that rose to the level of being an immediate safety concern. Each classroom has a direct secondary exit to the outdoors. Evacuation signs that include written and diagram instructions were posted by most of the doors but had been torn down by a couple and these do need to be replaced. The center does continue to use the deadbolt locks on some of the classrooms doors. This has been referred to the Fire Marshal in the past who has spoken with the center about options the center does need to ensure that they continue to comply with the requirements and recommendations of the fire marshal. Each room has windows along the exterior walls that provide natural light, ventilation, and a view of the outdoors. Bathrooms are located off the main hallways and several of the classrooms have sinks in the room to facilitate hand washing. A separate building is also present which is divided with half being used for a large motor skill/indoor gym area, and the other half for storage.

Rooms are divided in to activity centers through the placement of furniture and play structures. The arrangement of the rooms did not create any blind areas and provided children with room to play. The available activity centers include options such as small/large manipulatives, reading, dramatic play, music/media, art/crafts, math/science, group learning, and table games. Each room had a good selection of toys and materials that were generally appropriate to the ages of the children present and which were in good repair. It was noted that some of the toys in the older infant room did include small parts such as the wheels on some cars/trucks. It was reviewed that items less than 1 1/4 inches in diameter and 2 1/4 inches in length can be a choking hazard and should be removed from classrooms with children under 3 year of age. For children under 4 years of age who may still be prone to mouthing toys items with small parts should be kept in storage and brought out for supervised play.

Copies of the daily schedule and planned curriculum were posted. The curriculum plans for the center do tend to be more relaxed during the summer with the example of the school age children which tends to be identified by special activities such as going to the pool. On the day of my visit the planned event was for the children to go to a pottery activity. All staff were observed to be doing an excellent job of attending to the children's needs and engaging with the children in a way that helped the children develop skills. This included staff in the infant rooms playing with the young infants on the floor to help them develop muscle strength, and bonding while staff with the older infants engaged them in play to help them with

standing, walking, catching, and other activities. In other classrooms as the children were playing the teachers talked with them about their play such as one teacher talking with a child about finding objects in a homemade repurposed experience bottle. In another classroom for the 3 year old children one teacher was engaging with the children that were using magnet tiles to build a castle which the children directed, and the other teacher played with children using a commercially produced activity of matching simple shape tiles of different colors to an outline to produce more complex shapes. Good behavior management practices were observed with the teachers using proactive interactions to recognize and encourage positive behaviors, and redirecting the children when they were engaging in inappropriate behavior.

Initially upon arrival the school age classroom was out of ratio with one teacher present with 45 children and Nikole helping to fill in. Nikole stated that she had a couple staff who called in sick that day and she did have additional staff coming. Those additional employees did arrive within 30 minutes. Despite the large number of children the teacher in the classroom, (Abby), did an excellent job of engaging the children in a quiet group activity of playing a game of I-Spy while waiting for the other staff to arrive so they could leave for the planned trip. Ratio was maintained with an additional staff member accompanying the children when they did leave for the day trip. The teacher also did an excellent job of reviewing which staff were responsible for which children reading names off a list and identifying the children with the other teachers as the group split-up. While the center was in ratio during the visit there were issues regarding supervision that were observed. This included older children that were allowed to leave classrooms to use the restrooms, children that were observed to be in the kitchen area, and one 3 year old who was directed to return an ice-pack to the staff in the kitchen on their own. Each of these situations does create the potential for a child to be injured in an unknown manner, go missing from the center, or engage in inappropriate behavior. Children do need to be within the direct line of sight and/or sound of staff at all times. For situations such as school age children who do not need assistance in restrooms and where there may only be 1 staff member for a classroom the teacher should at a minimum stand in the doorway of the classroom to ensure that the child goes to the restroom rather some other location, and be attentive for any indications that the child may need assistance or be engaging in inappropriate behavior. Licensing standards also prohibit children from kitchen areas. Additionally while in the center office reviewing administrative records a child entered the office and engaged in conversation with me for several minutes where no staff member was present or in a position to observe the interactions.

Good health and safety practices were generally observed but some practices do need to be reviewed. I was able to observe a diaper change during the visit and the teacher did not wash the child's hands following the diaper change, nor was the changing station properly cleaned in that the disinfectant was not allowed to dwell. Children's hand must be washed following all diapering/toileting. When using chemical cleaners the staff shall read and follow the label directions regarding the use of the product for the intended purpose. In addition the center did have a therapy pet come to the center to interact with the children. The center did have documentation to show the animal was in good health and of a gentle disposition. After petting the animal the children did not wash their hands, or at a minimum use a hand sanitizer before returning to engaging in play in the classroom. Medications, chemical cleaners, and other items labeled as "Keep Out Of The Reach Of Children" were stored in areas that were inaccessible to children. Good safe sleep practices were observed on the day of my visit. First aid kits are maintained in classrooms and have materials necessary to address most common first aid needs.

The center does have a kitchen and meals are prepared on site. A copy of the planned menu is posted and provides a good variety of nutritious meal options. It was noted that the center did have hotdogs present that contained a chicken and pork blend. While CACFP guidelines do allow hotdogs they are required to be an all beef product. Good food storage practices were generally observed though one or two bulk package items such as cereals had been rolled close and were not in an air tight sealable container. Meals are served in a small cafeteria area attached to the kitchen and the classrooms rotate meal times. Good food service practices were generally observed with the staff wearing food service gloves, and using measured scoops to ensure that each child received a full serving. The staff did not eat with the children but did provide supervision at the tables.

Due to weather conditions the playground was not fully reviewed but a visit will be made to the center at a later date and any issues identified will be addressed at that time. Despite this the playground was observed and is divided in to different spaces by chain link fencing and all areas are fully enclosed. One area has climbing structures and a sandbox, and the other is a large open grassy area with a large shelter and picnic table area and paved basketball court. The center uses wood mulch for fall surfacing beneath climbing structures and completed a renovation of removing the old material and retaining wall and install new material and covering a larger space. Nikole identified that 9 inches of material was installed and the center will be adding to that in August. Shade is provided in each area either by constructed shelters, or mature trees.

In reviewing administrative records all required notices were posted in an area readily accessible and visible to all parents and visitors. The center does maintain a self-audit system to track missing and expired elements in both staff and child files. A random sample of both staff and child files were selected for review and compared to the self-audit which was found to be accurate in both cases. In reviewing child files the self-audit identified that 22 child files needed either an initial or updated physical. In reviewing staff files the self-audit identified 1 that needed updated 1st Aid/CPR, and several others that needed on-going professional development training. Inspection logs and certificates were current and valid for all required elements including vehicle maintenance records for the center owned van.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The center completed a substantial renovation of the playground space, and also paved the walk between the main building and the indoor large motor space.

The staff were observed to be doing an excellent job of engaging the children in the planned curriculum, and other other child directed play activities.

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

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.
-- Documentation not present for several staff. NOTE: Nikole stated that some staff had completed training but the documentation had not yet been added to their files.

109.10(1)a: Preschool (for children five years and younger not enrolled in school): Physical exam report submitted within 30 days of admission, was obtained no more than 12 months prior to admission, is signed by a licensed MD, DO, PA, Chiropractor or ARNP, and contains health history; present health status including allergies, medications, and acute/chronic conditions; and recommendations for continued care if necessary.
-- Number not in compliance: 22

109.10(8): Children's hand washing: Center shall ensure staff assist children in personal hygiene. For each infant or child with a disability, a separate cloth for washing and one for rinsing may be used in place of running water. Children's hands shall be washed:Immediately before eating or participating in food service activity.After using the restroom or being diapered.After handling animals.
-- Children's hands were not washed following diaper changes as required. Children also need to wash their hands following handling animals.

109.10(16)a: The center and supervisor shall ensure that staff knows names and number of children assigned. Staff shall provide careful supervision.
-- Children were observed to be allowed to leave classrooms where they were not in the direct line of sight or sound of staff.

V. 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.

*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.