Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Dubuque Childcare Center, LLC

Provider No.: 39824

Address: 3074 Cedar Crest CT, Dubuque, IA, 52003

County: Dubuque

Director's Name: Melanie Ricke

On-Site Supervisor: Mackenzie Sertle

Phone Number: 5635560943

E-Mail: m.c.sertle@gmail.com, mricke46@gmail.com

HHS Visit Date: 01/22/2026

Licensing Period: 02/01/2025 to 02/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 02/03/2025

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

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HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Tuesday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Wednesday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Thursday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Friday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Saturday			

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	70	28	47	8	153
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

An unannounced off year visit took place at the center on 1/22/26. This center is one of two for-profit centers, owned and operated by Melanie Ricke. Melanie is the center director, but Mackenzie Sertle is the on-site supervisor since Melanie is not always present at the center. Mackenzie is highly qualified with a bachelor's degree in elementary education and now many years of child care center experience and ongoing training. Mackenzie was not able to be present on the day of this visit. Loni Klass, assistant supervisor, was present along with other staff. Loni accompanied the licensing consultant throughout the majority of the visit. This center serves children age infant through school age. School age children attend on school days and on non school days with the Dubuque School District providing busing to and from the center on school days. The center does participate in the Iowa Voluntary Preschool Grant program. Loni states the center uses the Creative Curriculum.

The center is currently using the following program rooms on the main floor: Older toddler room (first room near entrance, 18 through 23 months), younger toddler room (12 through 18 months), transition room (six to 12 months), and infant room (approximately six weeks to six months).

The center is currently using the following program rooms on the second floor: School age room (room at the top of the stairs), young twos room (two years), threes room (three through four years), prek room (fours through five years), and older twos/younger threes room (across from prek room, two through three years).

Program rooms are spacious and generally appear clean, organized, and offer accessible materials to support program needs. Program rooms include adjacent restroom areas (some shared between rooms), diaper stations (for rooms needing these), and sinks within the program room as well. All program space was observed.

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The center does participate in the CACFP. The center serves breakfast, lunch, snack, and another later snack. The center employs a cook, and food is prepared on site in the center's highly organized kitchen.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

The center continues to be very well managed, and the staff work well together. The center continues at level one IQ4K. The rooms provide a weekly lesson plan as well as a monthly newsletter. The center also provides a monthly center-wide newsletter. The program rooms are large, bright with windows, and are colorfully decorated including displaying the children's projects and creations. The staff were once again observed to be engaged with the children in activities in all program rooms. Staff and child files and other licensing documentation continue to be highly organized.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

109.12(4)b
1. Review diaper changing procedures with staff as they are posted. Get out just the materials needed for the diaper change prior to starting. Gloves are removed prior to putting on the clean diaper.

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

N/A

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

The individual maximum capacities of the rooms as they are currently configured at the center are as follows:

Main floor:
Older toddler room (first room closest to the entrance door of the center, no cribs) = 20 children
Younger toddler room (next to the older toddler room, no cribs) = 17 children
Nursery (cribs) = 18 children
Transition room (across from nursery, cribs and cots) = 15 children

Second floor:
School age room (bonus room at top of stairway) = 8 children
Young twos room (across from stairway) = 20 children
Older threes room (next to young twos room) = 19 children
Preschool room (next to threes room) = 20 children
Older twos/younger threes room (across from prek room) = 16 children

The center was reminded of allowable age combinations. Two year old children may not be combined with four year old children, and three year old children may not be combined with school age children unless under the very specific rule 109.8(2)h for the very beginning and/or end of the day with only the number of children and staff present at the center as defined by the rule. The center will need to ensure compliance.

1. Emergency plan posting is needed at the back stairs exit door.
2. Ensure back stairs exit door is always kept clear of snow/ice.
3. Chairs are too tall for the majority of the children in the older threes room. Some tables are too low for the chairs in the young twos room. Children shall be able to sit in the chair with their feet on the floor and the table then meeting them at just above the waist area.
4. Ensure children are not able to pull on curtains.
5. Some of the dishes need to be replaced, those that are worn and stained that can no longer be properly cleaned and sanitized.
6. Cot sheets need to be replaced so that they fit properly and remain on the cots.

The center will continue with a full license. This report does not require a written response. Thank you.

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Date: 02/05/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Heidi Hungate

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**.