Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: A to Z Learning Center & Day Care-Donald

Provider No.: 21731

Address: 307 E Donald St, Waterloo, IA, 50703

County: Black Hawk

Director's Name: Chris York & Tricia Paeper

On-Site Supervisor: Tricia Paeper

Phone Number: 3192324325

E-Mail: atoz307donald@gmail.com, atoz4828@gmail.com

HHS Visit Date: 06/19/2026

Licensing Period: 07/01/2025 to 07/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 10/07/2024

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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HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday	5:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Tuesday	5:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Wednesday	5:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Thursday	5:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Friday	5:30 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	11	16	40	12	79
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

On 06/19/26 I made an unannounced off year licensing visit to A to Z Learning Center and Day Care-Donald Street in Waterloo. I met with Tricia Paeper, the director. She has been with the A to Z organization since April 2012 and she became the director for this site in November 2025. Aden Fischer is first in charge if she is gone and Avion Moffet is second in charge if Ms. Paeper is gone. The program employs eleven staff members.

A to Z Corporation operates four childcare centers in the Waterloo-Cedar Falls area. Chris York is the director of the centers. She has been involved with childcare for over thirty years and she has been the director of A to Z Learning Center and Day Care since it opened in 1991.

A to Z on Donald Street operates out of a free-standing building. The center operates Monday through Friday from 5:30 am until 6:00 pm. It serves children who are six weeks old through twelve-years-old. A to Z on Donald Street also houses the state voluntary four-year-old preschool program through the Waterloo Community School during the school year. Donita Schmitz is the teacher for the preschool. The preschool program operates Monday through Friday from 8:00 am until 10:00 am. There are currently 72 children enrolled at the center.

The program operates out of the following classrooms: Bear Cubs (6 weeks-12 months), Alligators (12-24 months), Monkeys (younger two-year-olds), Doodle Bugs (three-year-olds), Dinosaurs (three and four-year-olds), Jungle Friends (four-year-olds), Sea Creatures (four and five-year-olds), and Clowns (school-aged children). Not all the rooms are currently being used so some age groups are combined. An inspection of each room was completed. Windows provide natural lighting and artificial lighting is also used. 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

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children's birthdays were posted. There is an area for circle time in the rooms.

While I was present there were children aged one through three years old in the Alligator room. Two of the children were under the age of eighteen months. Licensing standards mandate that children under the age of eighteen months old cannot be cared for in the same room as children who are two years old and older. The exception is when during the first two hours of operation and the last two hours of operation when there are eight children are less present in the entire center.

The centers observed on the day of the licensing visit include library, Lego/blocks, table toys, games, puzzles, transportation, woodworking, art, dramatic play, writing, math, science/discovery, 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.

Secure the television cord in the school age room so the children do not have access to it.

A variety of resources are used to create lesson plans. Activities are developed around weekly themes. The themes are the same for the entire center up until school age. The school age children have different themes. Lesson plans were available for review. Activity calendars were also posted in every room.

There was a phone with emergency numbers and the programs address and phone number in the classrooms. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and evacuation diagrams were posted by most of the main program doors and outdoor exits throughout the center. The diagram must be posted near the exit in the infant room near the door to the Alligator room and the evacuation diagram must be placed near exits in the Doodle Bug room. A daily schedule was posted in each of the rooms.

The program participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Currently, everyone is helping cook. The center provides the children with breakfast, lunch and a morning and afternoon snack. The center has a rotation of four menus. Dishes are returned to the kitchen to be washed using the three-step method. Menus were posted. There are two refrigerators and an upright freezer in the kitchen. There were thermometers present.

In the infant room the center provides one brand of formula, baby food and cereal. They wash and sanitize bottles in the room. There is a refrigerator in the infant room and a thermometer was present.

The program uses bleach to sanitize the food tables and disinfect the changing tables. I discussed or observed diaper changes in the classrooms and procedures are followed. Handwashing and diaper changing procedures were posted in most locations. Post the diaper changing procedures near the changing table in the bathroom on the lower level.

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. Ms. Paeper has conducted drills since she started at the center but documentation could not be located for 2025. Staff members indicated they did practice the drills in 2025. The former director did not leave on good terms and it is believed she may have disposed of the documentation.

I reviewed documentation of monthly playground inspections. Ms. Paeper has conducted inspections since she started at the center but documentation could not be located for 2025.

A radon test was completed in February 2023. The results were within EPA guidelines. Radon testing must be repeated every five years. The annual fuel burning inspection was completed and no concerns were noted. A carbon monoxide detector was on site and is located on all three levels. They are in the Doodle Bug room, the Bear Cub room and the Sea Creature/school age room. Outlets were protected. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 10/07/24.

The parent information is located on a bulletin board inside the entrance. The childcare consultant and the handbook availability were posted. The license was conspicuously hung. A no-smoking sign was posted at the entrance. You must post the mandatory reporter poster on the parent board.

The center has three fenced-in play areas. Wood chips are used for surface cushioning in two areas. The third area only has grass and no equipment. There is a smaller area for children aged two through five-years-old. There is climbing equipment with slides and a playhouse. There is a concrete area for riding toys. There was a slide on the grass in this area that has a fall height greater than eighteen inches and it is required to be on fall surfacing. It is believed they took the slide off because

woodchips were recently added and the slide was not put back. This will not be cited.

The area for the older children has a larger piece of climbing equipment with slides and a tunnel, rocking toys, two small bicycle merry-go-rounds, a teeter totter, and small stationary items to climb on. There is a grassy area. There is a concrete area for riding toys and a basketball hoop. Trees provide shade in both locations.

New wood chips are purchased each year.

There is a first aid kit near the playground. Please remove the triple antibiotic cream. This item requires a signed medication authorization form. We recommend you clean an injury with soap and water and place a band-aid on it.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

Staff members had great interaction with the children while I was present. They took the children outside to enjoy the nice weather. Staff members were spread out on the playground space for supervision. They were actively engaged in playing with the children. Staff members asked me good questions to make sure licensing standards are followed. Staff members modeled good manners and maintained positive conversation with the children. Staff members provided the children with praise and used positive redirection when necessary. Staff members included the children in solving problems. In the infant room the staff members had good teamwork. They sat on the floor with the children and were great at multi-tasking. They were nurturing with the children and enthusiastic.

Ms. Paeper states the staff members are getting along well. She states they have a good group right now.

Ms. Paeper started as the director of this site in November 2025 and she states she loves being over here.

Ms. Paeper states they provide transportation to and from school for Lincoln Waterloo, Cunningham and Highland Elementary.

The program has two vans to transport children to and from school and they are also used for field trips.

The program has a terrific summer program for children that includes several field trips for the school age children.

The center partners with the Waterloo School District to house the voluntary four-year-old preschool program and participates in the Iowa QPPS program.

I observed Ms. Paeper walking around the center counting children.

I observed the center to be cleaner and better organized than past visits. Rooms were decorated.

Ms. Paeper is a terrific addition as the director for this program. She has been with the A to Z organization since April 2012. She is enthusiastic and has a positive attitude. Ms. Paeper states she does not let things bother her because if she is in a bad mood, it runs down to the other staff members. She states things will work out no matter what.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

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.
I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. Ms. Paeper has conducted drills since she started at the center but documentation could not be located for 2025. Staff members indicated they did practice the drills in 2025. The former director did not leave on good terms and it is believed she may have disposed of the documentation. The evacuation diagram must be posted near the exit in the infant room near the door to the Alligator room and the evacuation diagram must be placed near exits in the Doodle Bug room.

109.11(4)b: Record of monthly inspections of outdoor recreation area and equipment shall be kept.

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109.12(4)a: A safe and properly equipped area is provided for infants that does not allow for intrusion by children over two years of age.Children over age two who remain in the infant area are placed at the recommendation of a physician or AEA due to a significant developmental delay. Children are placed for a limited time with HHS approval if doing so does not pose a threat to the infants.
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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 HHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period.

Targeted Assessment: Behavior Management:
I discussed with Ms. Paeper her oversight of behavior management related to helping childcare staff: 1) Understand expectations, 2) managing frustrations, 3) monitor performance. Ms. Paeper states she tells staff members to get on the child's level and calmly talk to the children. Reassure the children they are glad they are at the center and they want them here. That normally turns behaviors around. If that does not work staff member will take children to the office. She states children need consistency and need to be kept active. Ms. Paeper states she tells staff members to let her know if they are frustrated. She lets staff members know she is there for them and she will step into the room to help deescalate situations or step in for them so they can take a break. She states it is important to recognize and acknowledge the staff's feelings.

Ms. Paeper states she monitors the situation by walking through the center frequently. She observes staff and children interaction. She recently put a note up for staff members telling them she would be sitting in rooms doing observations. If she continually sees frustration, she will try moving a staff member to a new room to find a good fit.

Date: 06/26/2026

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**.