Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Little Sprouts Daycare LLC

Provider No.: 51622

Address: 121 N Dodge ST, Algona, IA, 50511

County: Kossuth

Director's Name: Samantha Elbert (owner)

On-Site Supervisor:

Phone Number: 5153415041

E-Mail: littlesproutsalgona@gmail.com

HHS Visit Date: 08/22/2025

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

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 06/16/2023

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

- [ ] PTO
- [ ] 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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Program Population Served:

- [X] Infant(0-<24 Months)
- [X] Toddler
- [X] PreSchool
- [ ] School Age
- [ ] All Ages

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	26	17	25	10	78
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

An unannounced visit was made to Little Sprouts Daycare on 08-22-25 where I met with the center director and owner, Samantha Elbert. Samantha is well qualified for the position based on her education and experience as a Registered Nurse and in overseeing the daycare, as well as having completed on-going training in early childhood care and education. The program is located in a free standing building in the downtown area of Algona which was previously a bank but which has been remodeled for use as a daycare. The center provides full range daycare programming serving infants through school age children. The are approximately 45 children enrolled in the program served by 18 staff.

The general layout of the building remains the same as observed in prior visits. The center provides programming on two levels with the infants and toddlers on the upper level, and the preschool and school age children on the basement level. Infants are divided into three classrooms on the upper level with one for younger non-mobile infants, one for mobile infants 6-18 months, and one for older infants upto 24 months. A forth classroom on the upper level is used for 2 year olds. Classrooms on the lower level include 3 year olds, 4 year olds, and school age children. With the exception of the older infants, and the 3 year old preschool rooms all classrooms have windows that provide natural light, a view of the outdoor, and ventilation though the view and ventilation options were limited for classrooms on the basement level. Each room has several exits from the room with the middle age infant room have direct egress to the exterior. While most exits were maintained clear of obstruction some issues were noted for the lower level and the 4 year old preschool room. Restrooms are located off main access corridors and staff were observed to escort children to the restrooms as needed to ensure that supervision was provided as required. Changing stations were present in the infant rooms, and classrooms with children that may not be fully potty trained. A few minor maintenance issues were present but nothing that rose to the level of being a safety concern requiring immediate correction. All classrooms were observed to be clean. A full kitchen is available and meals are prepared on-site. The center does have a fenced courtyard used as an outdoor playground space.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

Each classroom is divided into activity centers that are generally arranged along the walls so as not to create any blind areas. The toys and materials present in each room and activity center were observed to be in good repair, and generally appropriate to the ages of the children present with the exception of some toys in the infant and two year old rooms. Each classroom had a copy of the daily schedule and planned curriculum posted. The center uses a commercial curriculum program which identifies learning themes, and specific activities that are established for each developmental age group. Supplies and materials are prepared and delivered to the classrooms for the teachers. Good interactions were observed in each classroom with each teacher actively interacting with the children and presenting the planned curriculum. Ratio was maintained as required with at least two teachers in each classroom with the exception of the non-mobile infant room where there was only one child present on the day of the visit. The center uses a positive support approach to behavior management with the teachers using routines, reminders, recognition of positive behavior, and redirection to encourage

appropriate behavior choices. During the visit there were situations where children were refusing to participate in group and/or having tantrums. In each case the teachers did an excellent job of working to calm the children, and seeking assistance and input from co-workers on how best to address the behavior with the focus being on how to support the child and assist them in regaining control and rejoining the group. All staff were very energetic with positive attitudes and spoke to the children using calm tones and positive word choices.

Good health and safety practices were observed during the time of the visit. All diapering stations had the required procedures posting present and all staff did follow those procedures during observed diaperings. Good handwashing was observed for both staff and children with regard to washing their hands prior to meal service, after restroom use, and at other times they became soiled. The center does use approved sanitizing and disinfecting products and did follow good cleaning practices with waiting for children to be out of the immediate area before using cleaning products, and cleaning surfaces immediately following their use, though there was some discussion reminding staff to read and follow label directions to ensure they are using them as recommended. First aid kits were present in each classroom along with materials in the center office. During the visit a teacher did bring a child into the center office stating the child had fallen on the playground and hit their head. Samantha did an excellent job of assisting the staff in assessing the child for injury, providing direction on symptoms to watch for, reminding the staff to complete an incident report, and notifying the parent immediately to let them know of the incident and assuring the parent the child appeared to be OK but giving the option for the parent to provide alternative instruction. Good safe sleep practices were observed for infants under 1 year of age. It was noted that infants over 1 year of age did have blankets in cribs and while safe sleep practices only apply to infants under 1 year of age it is recommended that they be followed for all children still making use of cribs.

As noted the center has a full kitchen and meals are prepared on-site. Good food storage practices were observed for both refrigerated and dry pantry items. One issue that was discussed was that all items including those brought in by staff for their own use and not intended for child consumption which are kept in classrooms also need to be stored in air tight sealable food grade containers to help prevent them from being an attractant to insects and rodents. A copy of the menu was posted and provided a good variety of nutritious meal options. The meal served on the day of my visit was consistent with the planned menu. Good food service practices were observed with the staff wearing food service gloves, providing supervision at the tables, and offering additional portions to children that were still hungry.

The center playground is fully enclosed by a tall wooden privacy fence. There is a small combination geodesic dome climber and slide structure but all other equipment is intended for ground based play. Rubber mulch and foam tiles are used for fall surfacing beneath the climbing structure. There are additional toys and materials such as riding toys, balls, and items for use in sand/water play. There are small green spaces where the children have planted some garden items which are used in some of the meal preparations. Shade is provided by the building and small awning shade structures.

All required notices for No Smoking, Consultant Contact, Mandatory Abuse Reporting, and the Center license were present and posted at the parent notice board. Postings for diapering, hand washing, and emergency evacuation were also present. A random sample of 20% of child files were selected for review and all were found to be in compliance with all required documentation with the exception of that needed an updated physical. Samantha did have an e-mail from the parent with the current physical attached but had forgotten to print the copy for the file. A random sample of 25% of staff files were selected for review and again all were found to contain all required documentation. All inspection logs and certificates were current and available. The center is participating in the IQ4K program which seeks to implement best practice recommendations and is currently rated a Level 1 program but is seeking to improve that rating to a Level 3 out of a possible 5 level scale.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

109.10(13)d: Daily checks to ensure all exits are unobstructed.
-- A laundry basket had been placed in front of exit corridor stairs. Staff did identify that this was temporary and it is normally stored in corner next to the doorway leading to another exit corridor which would block that exit, or in a classroom. The 4 year old preschool room also had a carpet which was used to define the group learning center for the classroom which was next to a secondary exit. When opening that exit door it would contact the rug causing it to curl and prevent the door from opening fully. Staff do need to ensure that all exits are maintained free of obstruction at all times, and all exit doors can open fully easily and freely.

109.11(2)a: The center will provide sufficient and safe indoor play equipment, materials, and furniture. It must meet the

developmental, activity and special needs of the children.
-- Items and toys with small parts that can break off which would be less than 1 1/4 inches in diameter and 2 1/4 inches in length were present in classrooms serving children under 3 years of age. These are considered choking hazards and need to be removed from those classrooms. Employee purses were observed being stored in classrooms in areas where they would be readily accessible to children. Purses, diaper bags, and other personal belongings that frequently contain items, or which could be a safety risk in and of themselves need to be stored where they are not accessible to children.

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

Samantha stated that the center did have a staff meeting scheduled for the following week and she would review with all staff those issues that were cited and work with lead teachers to develop schedules to review materials in the classrooms, and options to ensure that all exits are able to be opened.

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

A full license is recommended at this time. At least one visit will be made to the center during the next year.

Date: 09/03/2025

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**.