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-Waterloo Univ.

Provider No.: 21616

Address: 3243 University Ave, Waterloo, IA, 50701

County: Black Hawk

Director's Name: Chris York

On-Site Supervisor: Melissa Fischer

Phone Number: 3192322624

E-Mail: atoz3243@gmail.com
atoz4828@gmail.com

HHS Visit Date: 08/11/2026

Licensing Period: 09/01/2025 to 09/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 10/08/2024

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	39	18	46	42	145
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

On 08/11/26 I made an unannounced off year licensing visit to A to Z Learning Center and Day Care on University Avenue in Waterloo. I met with Melissa Fischer, the on-site supervisor. Ms. Fischer has a BA in social work and has been employed by A to Z since May 1997. She has obtained her National Administrator Credential (NAC). Addison “Addy” Fischer is her assistant and is in charge when Ms. Fischer is away. She has been with the program since June 2019. Chris York is the executive director of the A to Z centers. There are 21 staff members employed by the center.

The center operates out of a free-standing building. The program operates Monday through Friday from 5:30 am until 6:00 pm. It serves infants through school age children. There are currently 152 children enrolled at the center.

The program utilizes the following classrooms: infants (Bear Cubs), toddler room (Ducks, 12-18 months), Doodle Bugs (18 months and young two-year-olds), Teddy Bears (two-year-old room), Jungle Friends (three-year-old room), Dinosaurs (four-year-olds), Sea Creatures (five-year olds)/Clowns (school-aged children) share a room. An inspection of each room was completed. Windows provide natural lighting for all the rooms except for the Dinosaur room, where artificial lighting is 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. There is an area for circle time in each room.

The centers observed on the day of the licensing visit include library, Lego/blocks, table toys, games, puzzles, transportation, computers, art, dramatic play, writing, math, science/discovery, woodworking, sensory table, magnets, Play-Doh, 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. In the Sea Creatures/Clowns room you must secure the electrical cords for the television.

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The center uses a variety of resources to develop lesson plans. The curriculum is well-balanced and provides a variety of activities to meet the physical, emotional and developmental needs of the children. Activities are based on weekly themes. The themes are the same throughout the center (except the school age room) and each teacher prepares lesson plans with age-appropriate activities for their class. A lesson plan was available in each room.

Emergency numbers and the center's address and phone number were posted in each of the classrooms. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and evacuation diagrams were posted by the main program and outdoor exits throughout the center. A daily schedule was posted in each room.

The center participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Jodi Thein is the full time cook at the center. The center provides breakfast, lunch and a morning and afternoon snack. There are four rotating menus. Menus were posted. Allergies are posted. Food was stored according to NHSPS guidelines in the kitchen. The children are being served their food.

All refrigerators and freezers had working thermometers. The kitchen was observed to be clean and organized. The center uses the three-step method to wash dishes.

The center provides two types of baby formula or parents can provide their own. The center also provides baby food and cereal. Bottles are washed and sanitized in the room. There is a refrigerator in the infant room and a thermometer was present.

The center uses bleach and water to sanitize the food tables and disinfect the diaper changing tables.

I observed or discussed diaper changes in the rooms where they occurred. In the infant room and Teddy Bear room the staff members left their gloves on through the entire process. Gloves are considered soiled and must be removed before putting on the new diaper and dressing the child. Also in both rooms, the staff members did not wash the children's hands. Children's hands must be washed with soap and water following every diaper change. In the infant room I observed a staff member holding the child while cleaning and disinfecting the changing table. This cannot occur. There is powder in the infant room. This must be removed as powder can be an asthmatic trigger.

The center uses cribs and cots for naps. There were loose fitting sheets in the infant room. Sheets must be tight fitting in cribs.

In the infant room a child was placed in the crib with a pacifier on a string. This is considered a choking hazard. The pacifier must be taken off the string when pacifiers are used in the cribs. A child was given a sippie cup in the crib. Bottles and sippie cups cannot be given to children in the cribs.

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. I reviewed documentation of monthly playground inspections. The radon test was completed in November 2024. Results were within EPA guidelines. The radon test is good for two years because the center had a radon mitigation system installed in 2001. The annual fuel burning inspection was completed and no concerns were noted. The program has carbon monoxide detectors in the school age/Sea Creatures room on the lower level and in the kitchen upstairs. Outlets were protected. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 10/08/24.

The outdoor play area consists of three separate fenced-in areas. Each area uses woodchips for surface cushioning.

The area for the infants, toddlers and two-year-old children has a small piece of climbing equipment with slides, pushing toys, riding toys, and dramatic play equipment. There is a concrete area for riding toys. There is also a grassy area. There is a large tarp for shade over picnic tables.

The second area is for three-year-old children. There is a piece of climbing equipment with slides. There is a castle with a slide. There are dramatic play items, riding toys and playhouses. Trees provide shade and there are picnic tables.

The third area is for preschool and school age children. There is a large piece of climbing equipment with slides, tunnels and several other activities. There is also a sand pit, monkey bars, and basketball hoops. There are a concrete area and a grassy area for the children. Trees provide shade.

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

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

I observed most of the classrooms outside. Staff members were spread out on all three playground areas. The older children were having a race where they were doing different activities, such as skipping and walking fast. The children had played with water balloons the day before and a staff member was picking up balloon pieces. In the toddler area the children were playing with water in a sensory table. On the three year old playground a staff member was playing with children on the slide. The children were enjoying their time and excited to talk with staff members about what they were doing. In the infant room the staff members had good communication with each other. They were each doing different tasks for the children. They were observed to be nurturing and attentive.

Ms. Fischer was observed visiting classrooms to check on the number of children in each room. Her office is near the infant room and when she hears crying, she goes to the infant room to assist staff members.

Ms. Fischer states the center has a good school age program during the summer months. They keep the children active. They participate in field trips every day except for Friday.

Ms. Fischer states they have a good core group of staff members who longevity with the program.

Ms. Fischer states they were working toward an IQ4K level 1, but it is currently on hold.

Ms. Fischer states they have three staff members using the TEACH program and two staff members using the WAGES program.

The center is in a secure building.

The center provides transportation for the school aged children to five schools in the area: Orchard Hill, Kingsley, Lowell, Cedar Heights and Becker.

There are pictures of staff members posted outside of the classrooms and in the entrance.

Ms. Fischer obtained her National Administrator Credential (NAC).

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

109.12(4)b: Each infant and toddler shall be diapered in a sanitary manner as frequently as needed at a central diapering area. Diapering, sanitation, and hand-washing procedures shall be posted and implemented in every diapering area. There shall be at least one changing table for every 15 infants.
In the infant room and Teddy Bear room the staff members left their gloves on through the entire process. Gloves are considered soiled and must be removed before putting on the new diaper and dressing the child. Also in both rooms, the staff members did not wash the children's hands. Children's hands must be washed with soap and water following every diaper change. In the infant room I observed a staff member holding the child while cleaning and disinfecting the changing table. This cannot occur. There is powder in the infant room. This must be removed as powder can be an asthmatic trigger.

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

N/A

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

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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. Fischer her oversight of behavior management related to helping childcare staff: 1) Understand expectations, 2) managing frustrations, 3) monitor performance. Ms. Fischer states they go over the behavior policies with new staff members. They have staff meetings two or three times each year and they always review behavior policies and brainstorm as a group if someone is having problems in a classroom. She explains that she knows working in childcare can be frustrating. She lets staff members know there is always someone available to step in and give them a break if they need one. She tries to show staff members they are appreciated by doing special things for them, such as buying ice cream.

Ms. Fischer states on occasion children are brought to the office but they try not to make this a typical practice because some children see this as a reward.

Ms. Fischer states to monitor the situation, she walks through the building at least once every hour. She checks on staff members and numbers. She states she can also hear everything on the main floor from the office. If she hears crying or voices raised, she will go to the classroom and help.

Date: 08/13/2026

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**.