Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Hills & Dales Childcare

Provider No.: 18820

Address: 3505 Stoneman Rd, Dubuque, IA, 52001

County: Dubuque

Director's Name: Laura Keehner

On-Site Supervisor:

Phone Number: 5635567878

E-Mail: lkeehner@hillsdales.org

HHS Visit Date: 05/08/2026

Licensing Period: 11/01/2026 to 11/01/2028

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 08/19/2025

Comments: Friendly foxes room approved by the fire inspector per email correspondence dated 11/2/25.

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	6:30 AM to 5:30 PM		
Tuesday	6:30 AM to 5:30 PM		
Wednesday	6:30 AM to 5:30 PM		
Thursday	6:30 AM to 5:30 PM		
Friday	6:30 AM to 5:30 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	40	30	49	24	143
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

An unannounced licensing visit was completed at this center on 5/8/26. The center director is Laura Keehner. Laura was present along with Kay Althoff, child care manager for the center. Laura is qualified with a master's degree in speech pathology and behavior analysis, a bachelor's degree in communication disorders, previous child care center experience, and also serves as the Program Officer of Autism Services here at Hills & Dales. The center is non-profit, and owned and operated by Hills and Dales. Hills and Dales has a well-defined organizational structure. The building also includes other programs run by the Hills and Dales organization. The center serves children age six weeks to 12 years and provides before and after school and non school day care. The center also serves children age 13 through 18 who have an identified disability. The center director states the center uses the Creative Curriculum. The center reports enrollment of 95 children.

The center consists of an open-type structure with program areas for children age two, and age three defined by walls and/or movable structures, a large entry area that serves as the center's kitchenette and where all but school age children and infants eat, a separate room for the young infants, a separate room for the pre-k children, a separate room for 12 through 23 months old children, restroom areas, an outdoor area, program room used for school-age children (located on the other side of the building and shared with other functions of the building but not at the same time), one conference room area (used for indoor large motor activities, not included in license capacity but available to use so long as the room meets licensing standards) that is located on the other side of the building, and the main kitchen which is also located on the other side of the building. The center does not currently participate in the Iowa Voluntary Preschool Grant program. Program rooms were once again generally nicely stocked with age appropriate toys, manipulatives, and art/craft supplies.

The main portion of the center has a boys and a girls restroom area with several toilets and hand washing sinks each. All children have to travel from their program rooms to wash hands and use the restroom. The exception to this is the nursery,

the toddler room, and the two year old room which do have a hand washing sink and a diapering station within their program rooms. The room used for the school age children also includes a hand washing sink within the program room. Children from the school age room travel to hallway restrooms very near the room in that part of the building. All program space was observed.

The center serves breakfast, morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack. This center does participate in the CACFP. The food is prepared in the main kitchen located on the other side of the building. That kitchen is licensed by the IDPH. The food is brought over to the center-side of the building (kitchenette area), and the center typically employs a staff person who is responsible to get the food ready to be served to the children.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

The new management team for this center is managing it quite well. Improvements in organization of the rooms, materials available, and general cleanliness of the center since the last licensing visit are quite notable. Staff were observed to be engaged with the children in activities. Staff appear to work well together. The support and cooperation of the parent company, Hills and Dales, continues to be good. Program rooms and the common area are decorated with the children's projects on display. The center completes daily information for all children at the center. The center director states the center plans to begin the IQ4K program. The center has continued to work closely with their CCRR and CCNC consultants.

The center is planning outdoor area enhancements and is working with their CCNC as well as a local university occupational therapy department. The center participates in the local library program where books are loaned to the center to supplement program activities. Licensing documentation for the licensing binder was found to be organized. Staff and child files were found to be highly organized. The center is using a tracking system to ensure file compliance.

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.
1. Tornado drills were not recorded for 5/2025 through 9/2025.

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

N/A

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

This report also processes adding an additional room to the license capacity for the center. The friendly foxes room is approved for school age children with a maximum of 13 children.

Targeted Assessment: Behavior Management
I discussed with (director) their oversight of behavior management related to helping childcare staff: 1) Understand expectations, 2) managing frustrations, 3) monitor performance.
The center director provided the following responses:
1) We start with our mission of Building Meaningful Lives and the philosophy of assume good intentions. At every monthly staff meeting, we begin the meeting with celebrations - what kids have achieved or fun things that they were able to do. The emphasis is on setting boundaries or basic classroom rules and then recognizing that all kids are growing and learning. Mistakes are opportunities to grow. These are values that are discussed at every opportunity. Our staff utilize a teams group chat to ask for assistance and support throughout the day. Childcare medical staff, admin lead, childcare manager and childcare director all will respond to those questions to ensure support for the staff members and children.
2) Because of the open classroom design, we are able to address voice volume quickly. We review video from cameras in rooms frequently and use them as teaching tools to show the staff how we can work through a similar situation next time. We have monthly trainings on positive behavior supports from behavior analysts in the agency. This includes recognizing and being aware of ourselves and how to build rapport with all the kids.
3) We have competencies that staff have to pass during the above mentioned trainings. We also have manager, director and

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admin lead do quality checks throughout the day. Our nurse and behavior analysts pop in and out of rooms throughout the days to observe and offer support and training as indicated.

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 postings need the written instructions for fire and tornado, center name/address/phone number, and phone numbers for police/fire/poison control.
2. Ensure tables used for food service activities are always cleaned and sanitized immediately prior to that activity and before children wash hands.

The center will continue with a full license. Please address the violation and the concerns noted above in this section of the report so that corrections are obvious and are maintained. This report does not require a written response. Thank you.

Date: 06/08/2026

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**.