Iowa Department of Human Services
CHILD CARE CENTER EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE

Name of Center: The Learning Tree Childcare Center **Enrollment:** 14 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 52223

Street: 515 Main ST **City:** Lansing Iowa **Zip** 52151 **County:** Allamakee

Mailing Address: PO Box 105, Lansing, IA, 52151

Director's Name: Jenny Cole **Phone Number:** 563-538-6228

On-Site Supervisor(s): Jenny Cole **E-Mail:** thelearningtreeccdirector@gmail.com

Date(s) of Visit: 09-26-2024

Licensing Visit X **Unannounced Visit** X **Off Year Visit** **Administrative Change**

LICENSING VISITS

New Application **Re-Application** X **NA**

Signed Application (470-0722) Received **Yes** **No** X **NA** **Date Signed:**

FIRE INSPECTION X **State** **Local** **NA** **Is Fire Inspection Approved?** X **Yes** **No** **NA**

Date Inspected: 08-15-2023

Comments :

LICENSE TYPE: X **Child Care** **Preschool (ages 3-5 meets three hours or less per day)**

Financial Type: Profit X Non-Profit NA

Accredition: Accredited NAEYC NSACA Other X NA

Program Serves: Infants (0-23 mo.) 2 Years X Preschool-Age School-Age

Get-Well Evening Care Special Needs

SCHEDULE: Year-round X School-Year Summer Only

HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General	0	0	20	0	20
Summer					0

QRS Rating: 1

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 08-22-2023 to 10-01-2025
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Becky Frost **Date:** 09-28-2024

I. IF CURRENT LICENSE IS PROVISIONAL, IDENTIFY THE CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

N/A

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

On 09/26/24 I made an unannounced off year licensing visit to The Learning Tree Childcare Center in Lansing. I met with Jenny Cole, the director and lead teacher. Ms. Cole started with the program in August 2023. She has a BA in family services and a master's degree in public administration. She has previous experience in a childcare center. Emily Adam is the assistant teacher in the classroom. Abigail Byrnes is an additional caretaker for the childcare portion in the afternoon.

The program was given permission to open on 08/22/23. The program offers a three-year-old preschool class on Tuesday and Thursday. The core hours of the class are 8:10 am until 3:15 pm. Wrap around cared is offered before and after the class so the program hours are 7:00 am until 5:30 pm. There are 14 children enrolled in the program. The program only operates during the school year.

They are operating out of a single classroom in the basement of the public library. I observed the classroom. Windows provide natural lighting and artificial lighting is also used. The room is decorated with pictures of the children and their families and posters to assist the children with the learning process, such as the alphabet and colors. The children's birthdays were posted. There is an area for circle time.

The centers observed on the day of the licensing visit include library, Lego/blocks, table toys, puzzles, transportation, play dough, art, dramatic play, math, science/discovery, magnets, 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 were easily accessible to the children.

The program uses a play-based curriculum and a variety of resources are used to develop lesson plans. Parent-teacher conferences are offered a minimum of once each year. A permanent assessment portfolio is developed and maintained for each child. A lesson plan was available for review. A daily schedule was posted.

There is a bathroom with one toilet and one sink and handwashing procedures were posted. There are additional bathrooms in the building.

The children use mats to nap. The parents are providing the mats for their children. Bedding is stored separately in each child's cubby. It is taken home each week by parents to be washed.

The program is using their personal cell phones. Emergency numbers, that include the poison control phone number and the program's address and phone number were posted. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and an evacuation diagram were posted by the program door.

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. A radon test was completed in October 2023. The result was 5.3 pCi/L which is above the recommended 4.0. Ms. Cole states she informed the library and they spoke to a specialist who said they thought the results were inaccurate because a fan that is typically running was not on. The library was going to conduct another test but she did not follow up with them. Ms. Cole state she will follow up with the library.

The annual fuel burning inspection was completed and no concerns were noted. A carbon monoxide detector was present on the west wall near the teacher's supplies. Outlets were protected. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 08/15/23.

The program has a fenced in grassy area in the front of the classroom. The area is all natural. There is a dirt pile for the children to play in. They have chalk, transportation, dramatic play equipment, blocks and a sensory table. There is no climbing equipment so fall surfacing is not necessary. There is a bench, a chair and a child-sized table and chairs for the children to rest.

The program is not on the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Ms. Cole is in the process of applying for CACFP. They are following the CACFP guidelines. The children are given breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. The program provides breakfast and snack and lunch is provided by the local high school and delivered to the program. Menus were available for review in the classroom. Ms. Cole takes the dishes home each night and puts them through her dishwasher. Ms. Cole states depending on what is served, sometimes they dish the food out for the children and sometimes they use family style. Families are not charged for food. The program has a refrigerator and a thermometer was present. Not all food items were stored according to NHSPS guidelines. Once a food item is opened it must be stored in a sealed plastic, glass or metal container and be dated.

The program uses bleach and water to sanitize the food tables.

The program has a first aid kit.

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

Staff members had amazing teamwork. They were actively engaged in activities with the children outside and in the classroom. Outside they played group games with the children and when that was done, they were playing with the children in other activities. Staff members model good manners and provided the children with good handwashing reminders. Staff members provided clear and easy to understand directions. They used repetition to remind children of the rules, routines and schedule. Staff members were enthusiastic and created a fun learning environment for the children. They provided the children with praise and encouraged them to use their imagination. They used playdough to talk with the children about colors and shapes. They offered the children choices and talked with the children about sharing. Staff members were patient and used positive redirection when necessary. The children appeared happy and to enjoy their time in the program.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The program participates in field trips. This month they are going to visit the library (which is upstairs from them) and they are taking a virtual field trip to an apple orchard.

Ms. Cole provides parents with a detailed monthly newsletter that outlines the theme and lesson plan, activities and field trips, reminders and the menu.

In addition to fire and tornado drills the program practices lock down drills.

The program provides at least one parent and teacher conference each year and they keep a permanent assessment portfolio on each child.

The preschool program offers scholarships if the family is denied Child Care Assistance.

The preschool program is using the Brightwheel app to communicate with families, attendance and billing.

Ms. Cole has worked very hard for the Kee High school district to provide a three-year-old preschool class and childcare.

IV. IDENTIFY THE ASPECTS OF OPERATION THAT FALL BELOW THE STANDARDS REVIEWED:

109.15(5): Food preparation and storage procedures are consistent with NHSPS.
Not all food items were stored according to NHSPS guidelines. Once a food item is opened it must be stored in a sealed plastic, glass or metal container and be dated.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

A full license is issued for the remainder of the licensing period. All DHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period.

*Note: If you are the Child Care Center Director and you feel something is unclear or unjustly cited, please contact your DHS Licensing Consultant to discuss the issue. The child care director may also send a response which will be placed in the licensing file.

*Note: If you are a member of the general public, there may be additional information contained in the public file. You may contact the DHS Licensing Consultant to inquire.