Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Safari Child Care & Preschool

Provider No.: 51457

Address: 403 P AVE, Milford, IA, 51351

County: Dickinson

Director's Name: Dani Mueller

On-Site Supervisor: Abby Samuelson

Phone Number: 7123382731

E-Mail: safarichildcare2021@yahoo.com

HHS Visit Date: 05/07/2026

Licensing Period: 06/01/2025 to 05/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 11/07/2025

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

- [ ] PTO
- [X] 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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HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday	7:00 AM to 5:30 PM		
Tuesday	7:00 AM to 5:30 PM		
Wednesday	7:00 AM to 5:30 PM		
Thursday	7:00 AM to 5:30 PM		
Friday	7:00 AM to 5:30 PM		
Saturday			

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	10	7	30		47
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

I completed an unannounced visit on 05/07/26 at the Safari childcare center. I was introduced to Dani Muller who is the owner/operator of the daycare. Ms. Muller has a two-year degree in Early Education and several years of experience. There are 37 children enrolled at this program and 31 at the time of my visit.

During the visit, I observed all areas of the center, including classrooms, daily activities, nutrition practices, health and safety procedures, the outdoor playground, and administrative documentation.

The center has four classrooms: an infant room, a two-year-old room, a three-year-old room, and a preschool room. An initial bulletin board is displayed near the entrance, featuring photos of each teacher along with brief information about them. This provides helpful orientation for both parents and children. Throughout the center, there are many visual aids designed to assist children, including picture cues that demonstrate the actions associated with various words. The center uses an experience-based curriculum which is a curriculum that focuses on learning through hands-on activities, exploration, and real-life experiences. Instead of relying mainly on worksheets or teacher-directed lessons, children learn by doing. This might include sensory play, art projects, outdoor exploration, problem-solving activities, dramatic play, and interactive group experiences. The goal is to support each child's development by engaging them in activities that match their interests, developmental level, and natural curiosity. They also supplement their experience-based curriculum with theme-based activities and holiday-related learning experiences. These additions provide opportunities for children to explore new concepts in engaging and developmentally appropriate ways, while also creating a fun and festive atmosphere throughout the year.

I observed several staff members actively engaged with children throughout the center. Inside the classrooms, staff were

providing clear direction, modeling appropriate behavior, and encouraging children to participate in age-appropriate activities. They interacted at the children's level, using positive guidance and offering support during play, transitions, and group activities. Outside on the playground, staff were positioned to maintain appropriate supervision, facilitating play while ensuring safety. They participated in activities with the children, offered reinforcement, and assisted with turn-taking and problem-solving when needed. The staff demonstrated strong engagement and interaction skills in both indoor and outdoor environments.

Staff are working on completing PBIS training. PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) is a framework used in early childhood and school settings to promote positive behavior and create a consistent, supportive learning environment. Staff are trained to use proactive strategies such as teaching expectations, modeling appropriate behavior, offering positive reinforcement, and using consistent routines. The goal of PBIS is to help children build social-emotional skills, reduce challenging behaviors, and create a safe and predictable environment for all children.

The center uses the Bright wheel app to enhance communication with parents by providing timely updates, messages, and documentation of each child's daily activities. This tool allows parents to receive real-time information about meals, naps, learning activities, and important reminders. It also gives families an easy way to communicate with staff, review attendance, and stay informed about upcoming events. Overall, the app strengthens parent engagement and helps create consistent and transparent communication between the center and families.

The kitchen area is very clean and well organized. I observe staff putting on gloves They have Radon testing under normal levels. The annual fuel burning inspection is completed.

The playground inspection was completed, and the outdoor play area was found to be in excellent repair. The center provides a variety of age-appropriate climbing structures and outdoor toys that support physical development and active play. During my observation, staff were appropriately engaged with the children, offering supervision, participating in activities, and promoting safe and positive interactions.

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The goal of this center is to continue to increase their IQ4K certification level. They are also working on possible expansion to Spencer.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

The center's records were detailed, well-maintained, and organized. Ms. Mueller appears to work effectively with parents and addresses concerns promptly and directly. She is willing to meet one-on-one with families to discuss questions or issues and actively collaborates with them to find appropriate solutions.

The center is currently rated at Level 1 in the Iowa Quality for Kids (IQ4K) system. A Level 1 rating indicates the program has met essential quality standards in areas such as staff training, family engagement, health and safety practices, and basic curriculum supports. This level reflects that the center has completed initial requirements and is building a foundation for continued quality improvement.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

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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. Missing April Drills.

109.13(5)a: Sufficient refrigeration appropriate to perishable food is provided. They are missing a thermometer in the fridge and freezer in on room.

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

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

Targeted Assessment: Behavior Management

I discussed with Dani regarding her oversight of behavior management related to helping childcare staff: 1) Understand expectations, 2) managing frustrations, 3) monitor performance. Dani reports that staff have a good understanding not only of their own triggers but also of the triggers of the coworkers they partner with. Staff appear comfortable communicating with one another and with Dani when they need to take a break. Dani monitors classrooms regularly, and the center also uses cameras in each room to support observation and oversight.

I spoke with several staff members during my observations, and each one reinforced what Dani shared about their ability to redirect children effectively. Staff reported that they feel comfortable asking for assistance when needed and believe they work well together to support one another in managing behaviors and maintaining a positive environment.

Please provide consultant with an email confirming that those items that fall blow standards have been completed by 06/01/26

A full license is recommended at this time at this time.

At least one visit will be made to the center during the next year.

Date: 05/08/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Leann Steinhauer

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**.