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

Name of Center: Cougar's Den Daycare & Preschool **Enrollment:** 85 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 16172

Street: 413 State ST **City:** Ackley Iowa **Zip** 50601 **County:** Hardin

Mailing Address: 413 State ST, Ackley, IA, 50601

Director's Name: Amy Weichers **Phone Number:** 641-847-2699

On-Site Supervisor(s): Sharese Willems **E-Mail:** aweichers@agwsr.org

Date(s) of Visit: 06-21-2024

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: 12-12-2022

Comments : Inspection date 09-28-22 and compliance on 12-12-22

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

Get-Well Evening Care Special Needs

SCHEDULE: X Year-round School-Year Summer Only

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General	8	24	58	30	120
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

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

Licensing Consultant: Raymond Salsbury **Date:** 07-05-2024

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

N/A

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

An unannounced annual visit was made to Cougar's Den Day Care & Preschool in Ackley on 06-21-24 where I met with the center director Amy Weichers. Amy is well qualified for the position with extensive experience and on-going training in early childhood care. Amy started with the center when it opened in 2003 and worked at two previous child care programs prior to starting with this center. The center operates out of a free standing building that was designed to be a child care center. The center is over seen by the school board and an independent board. The program provides daycare and preschool programming to infants through school-aged children, and the school district also operates a formal preschool class during the school year. The preschool programming includes a three and four-year-old preschool program operated by the daycare, and a four and five-year-old preschool program and a Pre-K program operated under the Department of Education oversight. There are 85 children enrolled in the program served by 11 teachers. All aspects of the program subject to Licensing Standards were reviewed.

The general layout and design of the facilities and classrooms remains the same as observed in prior years. The program operates out of several classrooms determined by age groups. Each classroom was observed to be clean with no concerns noted due to maintenance or design. Each classroom has secondary egress from the room with several providing direct access to the outdoors. All emergency exits from programming spaces were clear of obstruction and opened freely and easily. The facility has a basement space which is used as a tornado shelter and for storage. During the visit the hot water temperature was measured to be 133 deg. F. at the spigot which can result in scald burn injuries and needs to be adjusted so that the temperature is no more than 120 deg. F. at the spigot when only the hot water tap is open. Each classroom with the exception of the infant room has restroom facilities located just off the classroom space so that the children do not need to leave the room. Changing stations are present in the infant room, and other classrooms where children may need diaper changes. Each classroom has sinks in the room to facilitate hand washing. All required postings for diapering and handwashing were present by all changing stations, and sinks used for hand washing. Each room has windows along the exterior walls that provide ample natural light, a view of the outdoors, and ventilation. The infant room is divided by a counter space and mobile gate structures to define one side for non-mobile infants, and one for mobile infants. Each room is divided into activity centers through the placement of low shelves, furniture, and play structures that are arranged so as not to create any blind areas.

Each room had a good variety of toys and materials that were appropriate to the ages of the children present in the room and which were observed to be in good repair. Those items that had been identified as not being appropriate have been removed. A copy of the daily schedule and planned curriculum were present in each classroom. Good interactions were observed in all classrooms with the teachers being engaged with the children and presenting the planned curriculum. This included examples of the 2-3 year old room having a curriculum focus of dinosaurs and the teacher reading a dinosaur book to the children. The 4-5 year old classroom engaging in small group activities with the teachers moving between the groups and engaging in play with the children. Ratio was maintained in each room as required by age, and Amy confirmed that additional staff accompany children when doing off-site activities.

Good health and safety practices were observed during the time of my visit. I was able to observe a diaper change during

the time of my visit and staff did follow proper changing procedures. Good hand washing practices were observed with the staff ensuring that the children washed their hands as needed and in an effective manner. The center did not have any children that were currently taking any medications but does have good policies and procedures regarding the administration and documentation of medications should it become necessary in the future. Allergy response plans were in place for children with diagnosed allergies. Over the counter medications were properly stored and labeled. First aid kits are present in each classroom and on the playground and contained materials necessary to address most common first aid needs. Chemical cleaners, purses, and other items that could pose a risk to children are stored in areas where they are not accessible to children. Good safe sleep practices were observed for infants under 1 year of age. There were a couple crib sheets that were observed to be oversized that allowed some gathering of the material and these should be replaced.

The playground was observed to have two areas with one for infants and toddlers, and one for preschool and school age children. The playground is fenced to both enclose the playground spaces and to separate the preschool and toddler areas. Fall surfacing in both playground areas consists of a unitary foam system. A large mature tree provides ample shade. The equipment was generally observed to be in good repair with repairs having been completed for those aspects that had been identified in the prior visit. Some of the other equipment such as the residential grade dramatic play structures were observed to be nearing or had reached the end of their useful life and should be replaced.

The center has a full kitchen and meals are prepared on-site. Good food storage and handling practices were observed in the kitchen and classrooms. A copy of the menu is posted and provides a good variety of nutritious meal options. The meal served on the day of my visit was consistent with the planned menu. The center uses a 5 week menu rotation. Meals are served in the classrooms and staff do pre-portion the meals. While the teachers did not eat with the children supervision is provided at the tables.

In reviewing administrative records all required notices were posted in an area readily accessible and visible parents and visitors. A random sample of staff and child files were selected for review and compared to the self-audits completed by the center which were found to be accurate. The review and self-audit identified that all child files contained all required information with the exception of 1 that needed an updated physical. The review of staff file identified that all staff files contained all required information with the exception of 2 that needed an updated FBI Fingerprint background check but one was for an employee on an extended leave, and the other had been submitted but not received yet. All required inspection logs and certificates were current and available.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The center is currently using the Playground communication application and is in the process of transferring information to that application.

The center has several very long term staff which has provided a strong level of stability to the program.

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

109.11(3)a: Center shall ensure that: Facility and premises are sanitary, safe, and hazard free. Adequate indoor and outdoor space is provided. The outdoor area shall include safe play equipment and area of shade. Sufficient space provided for dining. Sufficient lighting shall be provided. Sufficient ventilation. Sufficient heating. sufficient cooling. Sufficient bathroom and diapering facilities. Equipment, including kitchen appliances, are maintained so as not to result in burns, shock, or injury to children. Sanitation and safety procedures for the center are developed and implemented to reduce risk or injury or harm to children and reduce transmission of disease.
-- The measured temperature of the hot water was 133 deg. F. and this needs to be adjusted to a maximum of 120 deg. F. at the spigot.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

A full license will remain in effect at this time. Please provide a written response to the licensing consultant identifying a plan of action to correct and maintain those aspects cited as not meeting licensing standards and identifying an anticipated date of compliance. At least one visit will be made to the center during the next year.

*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.