Iowa Department of Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER COMPLAINT

Name of Center: Little Cougar Playhouse & Discovery Preschool **Enrollment:** 73 **License ID:** 22283

Street: 609 S Monroe **City:** Wellsburg **IA** **Zip Code:** 50680 **County:** Grundy

Mailing Address: PO Box 188

Mailing City: Wellsburg **IA** **Zip Code:** 50680

Director's Name: Amy Weichers **Center Phone Number:** 641-869-3773

On-Site Supervisors: Deb Saul **E-Mail Address:** aweichers@agwsr.org lcp@agwsr.org

Date of Complaint: 05-03-2024 **Date of Visit:** 05-03-2024

[ ] Scheduled **[X]** Unannounced **[ ]** NA

[X] Non-Compliance with Regulations Found **[ ]** Compliance with Regulations Found

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE

[X] NO CHANGES to licensing status recommended

[ ] PROVISIONAL license from **to**

[ ] SUSPENSION of License

[ ] REVOCATION of License

Complaint Details:

Did this complaint result in a serious injury? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Did this complaint result in a death to a child? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Summary of Complaint:

A complaint was received that the center was consistently out of ratio, and that there were unaddressed maintenance issues all of which had been reported to the administrators who have taken no action.

Licensing Rules Relevant to the Complaint:

109.8(2) Ratio maintained in center as required by age.

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.

Inspection Findings:

An unannounced visit was made on 05-03-24 where I met with the center director Amy Weichers, and on -site supervisor Deb Saul. Both were informed of the complaint and stated that they have had staff leave for other employment recently which has left them short staffed but that they have been addressing this in a number of ways. This included both Amy and Deb being in classrooms in ratio on the day of the visit, having moved children between classrooms to consolidate numbers, and closing the toddler room and notifying parents to pick up children as they did not have sufficient staffing to meet ratio.

A tour of the classrooms was made and each room with children present did have sufficient staff to maintain ratio as required by age including those where younger children had been combined with older children and considering the reduced staffing ratios for that younger age group. While visiting classrooms a brief review of the maintenance concerns was conducted. It is noted that during the prior licensing visit in October 2023 renovation construction was being undertaken and issues regarding exposed electrical boxes, holes cut in the drywall for either access/or installation of new switch boxes, and roof work were being conducted. Amy had identified at that time that the work was being done under the auspices of the school but that due to limited availability of materials the work was being delayed. During the current visit the electrical boxes that had exposed wires had been covered but there were still access holes in the drywall, and Deb identified that the roof did continue to leak in an area of the bathroom between the toddler and preschool programing rooms which had resulted in a couple of the suspended ceiling tiles being damaged and removed. Amy stated that she was uncertain when repair/renovation work would be completed. A visit was made to the school principal and superintendents offices but both were out at the time. An e-mail was sent to the school principal inquiring about the status of the renovation project. A reply was received from the principal that work has been scheduled to begin following the end of the school year which would be after 05-24-24.

Amy was asked to send copies of the child attendance and staff schedules for the last two weeks. That documentation was received on 05-07-24. In reviewing the documentation it was noted that staff schedules were generally consistent with the same staff being scheduled for the same classroom, hours, and days. Similarly the children tended to follow the same general daily schedule with regard to arrival and departure with some variation. While the center opens for operation at 6 AM the majority of arrivals for children are between 7-8 AM with staff arrivals also reflecting these time frames. Based on the staff schedules and child sign in times it does appear that there are limited periods of 10-20 minutes when the center would not have enough staff to maintain ratio depending on when the children and staff actually arrive. While this does appear to be an effect of circumstance rather than willful planning it is a situation that the center does need to adjust practice to reflect their general programming. It was discussed with Amy that having a more staggered staffing schedule of starting at 30 minute intervals would help to have staff available to cover those fluctuations of child arrivals.

Based on the information obtained this complaint is SUBSTANTIATED for violation of Licensing Standard 109.8(2) which requires that ratio is maintained in the center as required by age. The center was in ratio on the day of the visit, and Amy had made adjustments with having herself and Deb enter into ratio, closing and consolidating classrooms, and sending children home. In reviewing attendance and staffing schedules the center does appear to schedule based on planned attendance but there are limited periods of time during the initial opening and arrival hours where the center is out of ratio due to the influx of children.

Based on the information obtained this complaint is NOT SUBSTANTIATED for violation of Licensing Standard 109.11(3)a which requires that among other things the center shall ensure that the facility and premises are sanitary, safe, and hazard free. The center is located in a wing of the local school building and the school has been engaged in renovation work over the past year including some work affecting the daycare wing. The daycare does not have control over that renovation project. During the visit some issues that had been identified had been addressed and specifically included those that presented an immediate safety risk such as electrical outlets with missing cover plates. Other issues remain such as small access holes that had been cut into the drywall, and a roof leak affecting an area of a shared bathroom between the preschool and toddler rooms. While these issues do not rise to the level of being an immediate safety risk they do need to be corrected and are the responsibility of the school as the property owner to address.

Special Notes and Action Required:

CHILD CARE CENTER COMPLAINT

This complaint is SUBSTANTIATED for violations related to ratio and the following actions are required and/or recommended.

REQUIRED:
1. The center does need to ensure ratio is maintained as required by age. There were times during the morning arrival times that the center does appear to go out of ratio based on the actual times that children and staff arrive. The center can either schedule so that children are not checked in until set and scheduled times when staff are present to take responsibility, or the center could stagger staff arrivals for some staff to arrive earlier at 30 minute intervals which would be better able to accommodate the fluctuations of child arrivals.

Consultant's Signature:

Ray Salsbury

Date:

05-08-2024