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

Name of Center: TUG's Daycare & Preschool **Enrollment:** 140 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 22036

Street: 950 N Illinois AVE **City:** Mason City Iowa **Zip** 50401 **County:** Cerro Gordo

Mailing Address: 950 N Illinois AVE, Mason City, IA, 50401

Director's Name: Nikole Benson **Phone Number:** 641-424-9023

On-Site Supervisor(s): Grace Benson **E-Mail:** nikolebenson@ymail.com

Date(s) of Visit: 07-01-2024

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

Date Inspected: 07-18-2022

Comments :

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

Financial Type: X Profit 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	26	17	35	27	105
Summer					0

QRS Rating: 1

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:** 07-09-2024

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

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

An unannounced annual visit was made to the Tugs Daycare and Preschool on 07-01-24 where I met with the center director and owner, Nikole Benson. Nikole has been the owner and director of this center since 2011. Grace Benson took over the on-site supervisor position at the start of the summer 2024. Both are well qualified for the positions they hold with extensive experience, education, and training in early childhood care. The center is located in a free standing building which has been remodeled and added to over the past several years as the program has grown. The center provides daycare and formal preschool programming serving infants through school age children. The center also has a second program providing before and after school care which begins at the school during the school year and then transitions to the center. There are 140 children enrolled in the program served by 34 staff. All aspects of the program subject to licensing standards were reviewed during the visit.

The physical facilities and general layout of classrooms remain the same as observed in prior visits. Classrooms are established by age groups with two rooms for infants that are connected by a pass-through area where changing stations and bottle/food preparation is conducted. Each classroom was observed to be clean with only a few minor maintenance issues noted but nothing that rose to the level of being an immediate safety concern. Each classroom has a direct secondary exit to the outdoors. Evacuation signs that include written and diagram instructions were posted by most of the doors but had been torn down by a couple and these do need to be replaced. The center does continue to use the deadbolt locks on some of the classrooms doors all of which were engaged at the time of the visit. This has been referred to the Fire Marshal in the past who has spoken with the center about options the center does need to ensure that they continue to comply with the requirements and recommendations of the fire marshal. Each room has windows along the exterior walls that provide natural light, ventilation, and a view of the outdoors. Bathrooms are located off the main hallways and several of the classrooms have sinks in the room to facilitate hand washing. A separate building is also present which is divided with half being used for a large motor skill/indoor gym area, and the other half for storage.

Rooms are divided in to activity centers through the placement of furniture and play structures and again the general layout of each rooms is much the same as in prior visits. The arrangement of the rooms did not create any blind areas and provided children with room to play. The available activity centers include options such as small/large manipulatives, reading, dramatic play, music/media, art/crafts, math/science, group learning, and table games. Each room had a good selection of toys and materials that were generally appropriate to the ages of the children present and which were in good repair though a couple issues were observed. Some of the toys in the older infant, and toddler rooms had small parts that were less than 1 1/4 inches in diameter and 2 1/4 inches in length. These would be considered a choking hazard and need to be removed from classrooms with children under 3 year of age. In addition there were toys in other classrooms that were labeled as having been produced as promotional items for food vendors and these also need to be removed from all classrooms. Copies of the daily schedule and planned curriculum were posted. All staff were observed to be attending to the children's needs and engaging with the children in a way that helped the children develop skills. Good behavior management practices were observed with the teachers using routines, positive recognition, and redirection to encourage positive behavioral choices. Ratio was maintained in classrooms as required by age, however the center does need ensure that close and careful supervision is provided at all times. During the visit children of various ages were observed to be walking through the center without staff. While the center is a locked facility that would limit access from individuals that are not authorized to

be in the center there are other concerns that could arise such as a child eloping from the center, or engaging in inappropriate behavior. All children must be supervised such that they are within direct line of sight and sound of staff at all times.

Good health and safety polices are in place but practices do need to be reviewed. I was able to observe a diaper change during the visit and the teacher did not wear gloves which is allowed but then did not wash her hands or use a hand sanitizer between handling soiled and clean materials. In addition the teacher did not wash the child's hands or her own hands following the diaper change, nor was the changing station cleaned and disinfected following the diapering procedure. Medications, chemical cleaners, purses, and other items that could pose a safety risk to children were stored in areas that were inaccessible to children. Safe sleep practices were generally followed for infants under 1 year of age but one child was observed to be sleeping in a crib with a blanket swatch. The staff did identify that the child would be turning one year of age soon. While the amount of material was limited, and the child was close to being one of age Safe Sleep practices would still be required to be followed. In addition while those requirements would not apply to children over 1 year of age it is still recommended to not introduce blankets, pillows, or plush toys into cribs but rather waiting until a child transitions to a cot. The center also needs to monitor the use of lap sleeping and the amount of time that children are held before transitioning to a crib. First aid kits are maintained in classrooms and have materials necessary to address most common first aid needs.

The center does have a kitchen and meals are prepared on site. A copy of the planned menu is posted and provides a good variety of nutritious meal options, but also identified a variety of food items that would not be considered credible. This was especially true of snack options. While non-credible options such as cakes, cereal bars, and cookies can be provided as snacks or a part of a meal this should be limited to special occasions such as birthdays, holidays, or special reward. In addition it was noted that the menu identified that only snack item and water was being provided. While the center is not participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) for reimbursement it must still follow those guidelines which require that two credible options be provided. While water should always be made available to children it is not considered a credible option and if wanting to use a beverage as the other option the center can use unflavored reduced fat or skim milk, or 100% fruit juice. Good food preparation, handling, and storage practices were generally observed in the kitchen though one or two bulk package items such as cereals had been rolled close and were not in an air tight sealable container. Of more significant concern was in the infant room where a bottle warmer was present on the counter in the immediate area where diaper changing procedures were conducted. In addition the sinks used to prepare bottles were also used for hand washing and were not sanitized when changing between use intents. Foods and food service items need to be separated from areas used for diapering either by a physical barrier, or by distance of at least 3 feet to prevent splashing and cross contamination. With multiple sinks present one should be identified for food prep use, and the other for hand washing. If the same sink is used for both purposes it must be sanitized in the same manner that all food contact surfaces are prior to use. Meals are served in a small cafeteria area attached to the kitchen and the classrooms rotate meal times. Good food service practices were generally observed with the staff wearing food service gloves, and using measured scoops to ensure that each child received a full serving. The staff did not eat with the children but did provide supervision at the tables.

The center has a large playground space that is divided in to different spaces by chain link fencing and all areas are fully enclosed. One area has climbing structures and a sandbox for older preschool and school age children, another for infants and toddlers, a large open grassy area with a large shelter and picnic table area and paved basketball court. In addition as noted earlier the center does have a large indoor area that can be used when weather conditions are not conducive to outdoor play. The center uses wood mulch for fall surfacing beneath climbing structures and a good depth of material was present beneath all climbing structures and swings. All of the equipment was observed to be in good repair. Shade is provided in each area either by constructed shelters, or mature trees.

In reviewing administrative records all required notices were posted in an area readily accessible and visible to all parents and visitors. The center does maintain a self-audit system to track missing and expired elements in both staff and child files. A random sample of both staff and child files were selected for review and compared to the self-audits which were found to be accurate in both cases. In reviewing child files the self-audit identified 7 child files needed either an initial or updated physical. One other issue that was noted is that the center does maintain daily records for children under 2 years of age as required and while the forms do prompt staff for all required elements staff are not including information regarding daily activities and disposition of children. It was reviewed that these are required for each child each day and should be recorded for both morning and afternoon timeframes. In reviewing staff files the self-audit identified 4 that needed an initial or renewed FBI Fingerprint background check. In addition Nikole did identify that the center was working with a program through the schools to help individuals who would like to consider a career in early childhood care and education where by the school does training and also conducts the fingerprint checks to provide to the center and that these are some of the FBI records the center was waiting on. It was reviewed that due to confidentiality and portability restrictions the school should not be releasing those records to the center but that an alternative confirmation form could be utilized and copy of the form would be sent to the center. Inspection logs and certificates were current and valid for all required elements including vehicle maintenance records for the center owned van.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The center continues to update and upgrade the equipment and facilities with the most recent update being installing a new furnace in February of this year.

Nikole identified that following a couple years of substantial updates and renovations the center focused on developing a period of stability for both child enrollment and staffing. This has allowed the center to develop strong relationships between the children and staff, and focus on good curriculum development.

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

109.9(1)b: All files contain:A signed copy of DHS criminal history record check or any other permission form approved by the Department of public Safety for conducting an Iowa or national criminal history check. A copy of Request for Child Abuse Information.Copies of the results of Iowa records checks conducted.Copies of national criminal history check results.Any Department-issued documents sent to the center related to records check.
-- Number not in compliance: 4

109.9(4): Daily written records are maintained for each child under two years of age and include time periods slept, amount of/time food consumed, time/irregularities of elimination patterns, general disposition, and general summary of activities.
-- While daily sheets are completed and do prompt for all required elements staff are not logging daily disposition and activities.

109.10(15)d: Daily checks to ensure all exits are unobstructed.
-- Deadbolt locks were engaged on emergency exits. These must be disengaged when the center is occupied.

109.10(16)a: The center and supervisor shall ensure that staff knows names and number of children assigned. Staff shall provide careful supervision.
-- Children were observed to be in hallways and other areas where they were not within the direct line of sight and sound of staff.

109.12(4): Sufficient toilet articles are provided for handwashing.Sufficient and safe indoor play equipment, materials, and furniture that conforms with CPSC or ASTM.Play equipment, materials, and furniture meet the developmental, activity, and special needs of the children.Room's arrangement does not obstruct the direct observation of children.Individual covered mats, beds, or cots, and appropriate bedding is provided for all children who nap.Procedures are developed and implemented to maintain equipment and materials in a sanitary manner.Sufficient spacing is maintained between equipment to reduce transmission of disease and allow ease of movement by children and staff to respond to activities and care needs.Sanitary procedures are followed for use and storage of personal hygiene articles.
-- Toys labeled as promotional items for food vendors need to be removed. Items and toys with parts less than 1 1/4 inches diameter and 2 1/4 inches length need to be removed from classrooms serving children under 3 years of age. Cover sheets or other bedding that can be removed and laundered as needed is required for all cribs/cots/mats used for sleeping.

109.12(5)b: Infants diapered in a sanitary manner as needed in central diapering area.One changing table for every 15 infants/toddlers needing diaper changes.Diapering, sanitation, and handwashing procedures posted and implemented in central diapering area.
-- Staff did not wear gloves and did not wash/use sanitizer between handling soiled and clean materials, did not wash the infant's or their own hands following diapering, did not clean and disinfect the changing station.

109.15(2): Center shall follow minimum CACFP menu patterns for meals and snacks.Menus planned one week in advance, made available to parents, and kept on file with substitutions noted.Avoid foods with high incident rate of causing choking.
-- Non-credible snack options were being provided on a regular basis, and only one credible food item was being offered for snacks. Two credible options need to be offered for snacks, and while non-credible options are allowed these should be limited to special occasions such as holidays or birthdays.

109.15(5)b: Sanitary and safe methods in food preparation, serving, and storage sufficient to prevent transmission of disease, infestation, and spoilage are followed.Staff preparing food that have injuries on hands wear protective gloves.Staff serving food use clean serving utensils and have clean hands/wear protective gloves.
-- Infant bottle warmers were present on the counter and in the area where diapering procedures were conducted. Sinks used for bottle preparation were also used for handwashing and were not sanitized when changing between use intent.

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.