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

Name of Center: A to Z Learning Center & Day Care-Waterloo Univ. **Enrollment:** 154 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 21616

Street: 3243 University Ave **City:** Waterloo Iowa **Zip** 50701 **County:** Black Hawk

Mailing Address: 3243 University Ave, Waterloo, IA, 50701

Director's Name: Chris York **Phone Number:** 319-232-2624

On-Site Supervisor(s): Melissa Fischer **E-Mail:** atoz3243@gmail.com atoz4828@gmail.com

Date(s) of Visit: 07-07-2025

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

LICENSING VISITS

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

Signed Application (470-0722) Received X **Yes** **No** **NA** **Date Signed:** 07-10-2025

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

Date Inspected: 10-08-2024

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 X 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	39	18	46	42	145
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 09-01-2025 to 09-01-2027
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Becky Frost **Date:** 08-07-2025

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

N/A

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

On 07/07/25 I made an unannounced licensing visit to A to Z Learning Center and Day Care on University Avenue in Waterloo. I met with Melissa Fischer, the on-site supervisor. Ms. Fischer has a BA in social work and has been employed by A to Z since May 1997. She has obtained her National Administrator Credential (NAC). Tricia Paeper is her assistant and is in charge when Ms. Fischer is away. She has been with the program since April 2012. Chris York is the executive director of the A to Z centers. There are 26 staff members employed by the center.

The center operates out of a free-standing building. The program operates Monday through Friday from 5:30 am until 6:00 pm. It serves infants through school-age children. There are currently 154 children enrolled at the center.

The program utilizes the following classrooms: infants (Bear Cubs), toddler room (Ducks, 12-18 months), Doodle Bugs (18 months and young two-year-olds), Teddy Bears (two-year-old room), Jungle Friends (three-year-old room), Dinosaurs (four-year-olds), Sea Creatures (five-year olds)/Clowns (school-aged children) share a room. An inspection of each room was completed. Windows provide natural lighting for all the rooms except for the Dinosaur room, where artificial lighting is used. The rooms are decorated with pictures of the children, the children's art projects, and posters to assist the children with the learning process, such as the alphabet, shapes, colors and numbers. There is an area for circle time in each room.

The centers observed on the day of the licensing visit include library, Lego/blocks, table toys, games, puzzles, transportation, computers, art, dramatic play, writing, math, science/discovery, woodworking, sensory table, magnets, Play-Doh, 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 are easily accessible to the children.

I observed or discussed diaper changes in the rooms where they occurred. Proper procedures are followed. The center uses a variety of resources to develop lesson plans. The curriculum is well-balanced and provides a variety of activities to meet the physical, emotional and developmental needs of the children. Activities are based on weekly themes. The themes are the same throughout the center (except the school-age room) and each teacher prepares lesson plans with age-appropriate activities for their class. A lesson plan was available in most rooms. Lesson plans were not available for review in the Ducks room and Doodle Bugs room.

There was a phone with emergency numbers and the center's address and phone number in the classrooms. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and evacuation diagrams were posted by the main program and outdoor exits throughout the center. A daily schedule was posted in each room.

The center partners with Central Rivers AEA to provide the children with hearing screenings and the Lion's Club provides vision screenings. They also work with Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R).

The center participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Jodi Thein is the full time cook at the center. The center provides breakfast, lunch and a morning and afternoon snack. There are four rotating menus. Menus were

posted. Allergies are posted. Food was stored according to NHSPS guidelines in the kitchen. The children are being served their food.

All refrigerators and freezers had working thermometers. The kitchen was observed to be clean and organized. The center uses the three-step method to wash dishes.

The center provides two types of baby formula or parents can provide their own. The center also provides baby food and cereal. Bottles are washed and sanitized in the room. The refrigerator in the infant room did not have a thermometer and the temperature in the freezer portion was running high. The temperature was ten degrees, and it should be zero degrees or lower. Please keep an eye on this.

The center uses bleach and water to sanitize the food tables and disinfect the diaper changing tables. The toilet off the Ducks room must be cleaned.

The center uses cribs and cots for naps. There were loose fitting sheets in the Ducks room. Sheets must be tight fitting in cribs. In several rooms, I observed the blankets that are stored in bins to be hanging over the bins and touching other children's bedding. This cannot occur. The bedding of one child cannot touch the bedding of another child.

There was safe sleep violations observed in the infant room. I observed mobiles attached to three cribs. I informed staff members that children under the age of one year old cannot have anything in the cribs or attached to the cribs and the mobiles were removed.

In the infant room I observed a pacifier on a long string. Strings cannot be longer than twelve inches as they are considered a choking hazard. Additionally, there were children who had beaded pacifiers and there was a toy with small beads. Beads are a choking hazard and they are not allowed in the infant room.

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. I reviewed documentation of monthly playground inspections. A radon test was completed in November 2024 and is good for two years. Results were within EPA guidelines. The center had a radon mitigation system installed in 2001. The annual fuel burning inspection was completed and no concerns were noted. The program has carbon monoxide detectors in the school-age/Sea Creatures room on the lower level and in the kitchen upstairs. Outlets were protected. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 10/08/24.

In the Jungle Friends room, I observed an incident report dated 07/03/25 that was not signed by parents. Licensing standards require parents to be notified of incidents "on the day of the incident". Incident reports must be signed on the day of the incident.

The outdoor play area consists of three separate fenced-in areas. Each area uses woodchips for surface cushioning.

The area for the infants, toddlers and two-year-old children has a small piece of climbing equipment with slides, pushing toys, riding toys, and dramatic play equipment. There is a concrete area for riding toys. There is also a grassy area. Picnic tables are available. The center has ordered a new tarp for shade because the previous one was torn in a storm.

The second area is for three-year-old children. There is a piece of climbing equipment with slides. There is a castle with a slide on the grassy area. This item has a fall height greater than eighteen inches and is required to be on fall surfacing. I informed them this must be placed on the woodchips or removed. There is a basketball hoop, dramatic play items, riding toys and playhouses. Trees provide shade and there are picnic tables.

The third area is for preschool and school-age children. There is a large piece of climbing equipment with slides, tunnels and several other activities. There is also a sand pit, monkey bars, and basketball hoops. There is a concrete area and a grassy area for the children. Trees provide shade.

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

Staff and children's files were reviewed at the time of the licensing visit. I reviewed 15 children files. Files must contain emergency contact information for the doctor and dentist of each child. The doctor's and dentist's name, phone number and complete street address must be provided. Four files did not provide any dental emergency contact information and one file did not provide any doctor's emergency contact information.

I reviewed three staff files. One staff member had an outdated Iowa background check (SING). The fingerprint results could not be located. The staff member will have to do fingerprints again. The staff member had an outdated universal precautions training and outdated mandatory reporter training. The staff member had a current physical but it is invalid because it is not on the mandated HHS employee physical form.

I reviewed policy and procedures, staff and parent handbooks. The necessary written emergency procedures and policies were present. Emergency Preparedness Plans have been completed.

I visited the program on a beautiful day so the staff members and children were outside most of my visit. The children even enjoyed an outdoor snack. Staff members in all three play areas were actively engaged in activities with the children. They were playing basketball with the older children. For the three-year-old children they had circle time outside. For the toddlers the staff members were helping children down the slides and spritzing them water. They blew bubbles for the children to catch. They were spread out on the playground to provide careful supervision. I observed the staff members provide the children with praise and encourage them to try new things. There was water available on all the playgrounds. The children appeared to enjoy their time at the center.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

Ms. Fischer states they are working on an IQ4K level of 1.

Ms. Fischer and Ms. Paeper have a good working relationship in completing administrative tasks.

Ms. Fischer states they have a core group of staff members with longevity at the center.

The center has utilized the TEACH program and they have staff members on the WAGES program.

The center is in a secure building.

Ms. Fischer states they have a good summer school-age program. They keep them busy and entertained.

The center provides transportation for the school aged children to five schools in the area: Orchard Hill, Kingsley, Lowell, Cedar Heights and Becker.

There are pictures of staff members posted outside of the classrooms and in the entrance.

Ms. Fischer obtained her National Administrator Credential (NAC).

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

109.9(1)a: All files contain:Copy of a department criminal history record check form or any other permission form approved by Department of Public Safety for conducting an Iowa or national criminal history record checkCopy of a request for child abuse information form, when applicable.Copies of results of Iowa record checks conducted through the SING for review by the department upon request.Copies of national criminal history check results.Any department issued documents sent to the center related to a record check, regardless of findings.
One staff member had an outdated Iowa background check (SING). The fingerprint results could not be located. The staff member will have to do fingerprints again.

109.9(1)b: All files contain a pre-employment physical exam report completed within six months prior to hire and at least every three years. Physical exams shall be documented on form 470-5152, Child Care Provider Physical Examination Report.
The staff member had a current physical but it is invalid because it is not on the mandated HHS employee physical form.

109.9(1)c: All files contain documentation to indicate that ongoing staff training requirements are met, including current certifications in first aid/CPR and mandatory child abuse training.
The staff member had an outdated universal precautions training and outdated mandatory reporter training.

109.9(2)d: All files contain sufficient information and authorization to allow the center to secure emergency medical and dental services at any time child is in center's care.
Files must contain emergency contact information for the doctor and dentist of each child. The doctor's and dentist's name, phone number and complete street address must be provided. Four files did not provide any dental emergency contact information and one file did not provide any doctor's emergency contact information.

109.10(8): Recording incidents: Parents shall be notified on the day of the incident involving a child that includes:Minor injuries.Minor changes in health status.Minor behavioral concerns.Incidents resulting in injury to a child.Shall be verbally

notified immediately when there is:A serious injury to a child.An incident resulting in a significant change in health status.An incident includes the child being involved in inappropriate, sexually acting out behavior.A WRITTEN report, fully documenting every incident, shall be provided to the parent or authorized person. This should be completed by staff that witnessed the incident and retained in child file. Serious injuries and deaths must be reported to the Department within 24 hours.
In the Jungle Friends room, I observed an incident report dated 07/03/25 that was not signed by parents. Licensing standards require parents to be notified of incidents "on the day of the incident". Incident reports must be signed on the day of the incident.

109.11(3)a: Center shall ensure that:Facility and premises are sanitary, safe, and hazard free.Sufficient lighting shall be provided.Sufficient ventilation.Sufficient heating.Sufficient cooling.Equipment placed in the program area is maintained so as not to result in injury to the children.
In the infant room I observed a pacifier on a long string. Strings cannot be longer than twelve inches as they are considered a choking hazard. Additionally, there were children who had beaded pacifiers and there was a toy with small beads. Beads are a choking hazard and they are not allowed in the infant room. In several rooms, I observed the blankets that are stored in bins to be hanging over the bins and touching other children's bedding. This cannot occur. The bedding of one child cannot touch the bedding of another child.

109.12(1): Program structure that uses developmentally appropriate practices and written program of activities planned to the developmental needs of children served.Program complements but does not duplicate school curriculum.Schedule of program is posted in a place visible to parents.
Lesson plans were not available for review in the Ducks room and Doodle Bugs room.

109.12(4)e: The provider shall follow safe sleep practices for infants under one year of age:Infants shall always be placed on their backs for sleep.Infants shall be placed on a firm mattress with a tight fitted sheet.Infants shall not be allowed to sleep on a bed, sofa, air mattress or other soft surface.No child shall be allowed to sleep in any item not designed for infant sleeping, including but not limited to an infant seat, car seat, swing, or bouncy seat.No toys, soft objects, stuffed animals, pillows, bumper pads, blankets, or loose bedding shall be allowed in the sleeping area with the infant.No co-sleeping shall be allowed.Sleeping infants shall be actively observed by sight and sound.If an alternate sleeping position is needed, a signed physician or physician assistant authorization with statement of medical reason is required and an expiration date.
There were loose fitting sheets in the Ducks room. Sheets must be tight fitting in cribs. There was safe sleep violations observed in the infant room. I observed mobiles attached to three cribs. I informed staff members that children under the age of one year old cannot have anything in the cribs or attached to the cribs and the mobiles were removed.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

A full license is issued. 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.