Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: A to Z Learning Center & Daycare-University Ave

Provider No.: 22647

Address: 4828 University Ave, Cedar Falls, IA, 50613

County: Black Hawk

Director's Name: Chris York & Megan Gambell

On-Site Supervisor: Chris York and Megan Gambell

Phone Number: 3192666755

E-Mail: atozcedarfalls@gmail.com

HHS Visit Date: 07/17/2026

Licensing Period: 08/01/2026 to 08/01/2028

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 12/17/2025

Comments: Compliance on 01/19/26

Report Visit Type:

- [ ] PTO
- [X] Licensing Visit
- [ ] Drop In
- [ ] Administrative Change

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

- [ ] Accrediation

Program Duration:

- [X] Year-Round
- [ ] School Year
- [ ] Summer Only

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HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday	5:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Tuesday	5:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Wednesday	5:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Thursday	5:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Friday	5:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

- [X] Infant(0-<24 Months)
- [X] Toddler
- [X] PreSchool
- [X] School Age
- [ ] All Ages

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	20	12	43	30	105
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

On 07/17/27 I made an unannounced licensing visit to A to Z Learning Center and Day Care in Cedar Falls. I met with Megan Gambell, a director. Ms. Gambell started with the center in August 2008. Ms. Gambell has obtained her National Administration Credential (NAC). A to Z Corporation operates four childcare centers in the Waterloo-Cedar Falls area. Chris York is the executive director of the centers. She has been involved with childcare for many years and she has been the director of A to Z since it opened in 1991. Ms. York is also NAC certified. The center employs 20 employees.

The center is in a free-standing building. The program operates Monday through Friday from 5:30 am until 6:00 pm. It serves children who are six weeks old through twelve-years-old. There are currently 121 children enrolled.

The program utilizes the following classrooms: infants (Bear Cubs), two toddler rooms (Alligators are 12-18 months and Ducklings are 18-24 months), two two-year-old rooms (the Monkey room is for the younger two-year-olds and the Teddy Bear room is for the older two-year-olds), two three-year-old rooms (the Doodle Bug room is for the younger three-year-olds and the Jungle Friends room is for the older group), four-year-olds (Dinosaurs), the Sea Creatures room is for four and five-year-olds, and school-aged children (Clowns). An inspection of each room was completed. All rooms were in ratio the day of the visit.

Windows provide natural lighting in most rooms. The Clowns room is located downstairs and has minimal natural light, and the Doodle Bug room is located between rooms but receives natural light from the entrance. 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. The children's birthdays were posted. There is an area for circle time in the rooms.

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The centers observed on the day of the licensing visit include library, Lego/blocks/Lincoln Logs, table toys, games, puzzles, transportation, puppets, computer, art, dramatic play, listening, writing, math, science/discovery, woodworking, sensory table 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 the child's level, so they are easily accessible to the children.

In the Teddy Bear room, the staff member's purse was on top of the shelf that held children's toys. All staff personal items must be placed out of reach of children. The staff member did correct this when I spoke with her.

The center uses a variety of other 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 themes. The themes are the same throughout the center for the younger children. The school-aged rooms have their own themes. Each teacher prepares lesson plans with age-appropriate activities for their class. A lesson plan was available for review in all the rooms. The lesson plan in the Teddy Bear room was outdated.

There was a phone with emergency numbers and the center's address and phone number in the classrooms or shared by classrooms. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and evacuation diagrams were posted by most of the main program doors and outdoor exits throughout the center. Post the evacuation diagram near the door in the Teddy Bear room that goes to the Jungle Fiends room. A daily schedule was posted in each room.

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. I reviewed documentation of monthly playground inspections. The radon test was completed in October 2024 and is good for five years. Results were within EPA guidelines. The fuel burning inspection was completed and no concerns were noted. A carbon monoxide detector was on site on each level. They are in the school-aged room near the sink and in the storage room near the office. Outlets were protected. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 12/17/25, with compliance on 01/19/26.

The center participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Sanda M. is the cook. The center provides breakfast, lunch and a morning and afternoon snack. There are four rotating menus. Menus were posted. The kitchen was observed to be clean and organized. The center uses the three-step method to wash dishes by hand. Allergies are posted in the kitchen. There are two refrigerators, and two upright freezers and thermometers were present. Food items are stored according to NHSPS guidelines.

The program provides two types of formula. If the parents want a different brand, they must provide it. The center provides baby food and cereal. Bottles are washed and sanitized in the classroom. In the Alligator room the staff member was only washing bottles with soap and water. There is a sanitizer in the room to sanitize the bottles. On the day of the visit there was a sub in the Alligator room.

The center uses bleach and water to sanitize the food tables and disinfect the changing tables. I observed the teacher prepare the tables for snacks and proper procedures are followed.

I observed and discussed diaper changing procedures with the staff members and proper procedures are followed in most rooms. In the Bear Cubs room, the staff member is only washing children's hands with wet wipes. Soap and water must be used after every diaper change. In the Monkey and Teddy Bear rooms I observed concerns with diaper changes. There were no soap and water in the bathroom to clean the changing table between diaper changes. The Monkey teacher did not leave the bleach on the table for the necessary dwell time to disinfect the table. I did not see the Teddy Bear teacher clean or disinfect the changing table between children. Both classrooms take all the children from their classroom to the shared changing area. The Teddy Bear teacher left the children outside of the bathroom, where she could not fully supervise them while doing a diaper change. I observed the children hitting one another and playing with a light switch. The Monkey teacher brought the children into the bathroom for supervision but had a difficult time keeping the children in the bathroom. She would have to interrupt the diaper change, put the child down from the table and then go get the child who left the room. Additionally, when the teacher and children returned to their rooms, I observed the teacher leave their rooms and walk into the bathroom very briefly, leaving their children alone in the classrooms. This can never occur.

I observed Vaseline, Aquaphor and diaper creams that were not labeled in the bathrooms. All products must be labeled with the child's name or have "center" written on it if it belongs to the center. The sink in the bathroom near the Teddy Bear room and Monkey room needs to be fixed. Handwashing and diaper changing procedures were posted in all mandated

areas.

I observed daily sheets in the rooms for children under the age of two years old.

The parent information is located on a bulletin board inside the entrance near the office. The mandatory reporter, childcare consultant and the handbook availability were posted. The license could not be located on the day of my visit. A no-smoking sign was posted at the entrance.

The outdoor play area consists of four separate fenced areas. The outdoor play area is divided into sections to serve specific age groups. Woodchips are used for surface cushioning on two of the play areas and they are replenished frequently. The area for the infants and toddlers is a grassy area with some small toys. There is a tree for shade.

The second area is for two-year-olds and three-year-olds. It has woodchips for surface cushioning but also has a grassy area. There is climbing equipment with slides. There are picnic tables and a playhouse. The building overhang provides shade.

The third area is for preschool children. Woodchips are used as surface cushioning, but the area also has a grassy area. There are a couple pieces of climbing equipment with a tunnel, slides and monkey bars. There are also riding toys, a stationary dinosaur and stationary car to climb on and dramatic play pieces. There is a merry-go-round. There is a concrete area to play basketball. There is a sandbox.

The school-aged area is mostly grass. There is a concrete basketball court in the area. There is a sandbox. This area has limited shade and would benefit from a tarp. A picnic table is available. I would recommend more items in this area to entertain the children while they are outside.

Staff and children's files were reviewed at the time of the licensing visit. I reviewed 15 children files. There was one missing immunization certificate and two invalid immunization certificates. One was not signed and dated by medical personnel and one was not on the mandated Iowa Department of Health and Human Services certificate.

I reviewed two staff files. They were in great condition.

Emergency Preparedness Plans have been completed.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

I observed child friendly music playing in several classrooms. They were dancing with the children and actively playing with the children. The staff members interacted with the children at their level. They used play to talk with the children about colors and to count. They encouraged the children to use their imaginations. Staff members were observed using positive redirection. In the infant rooms staff members were observed on the floor rocking children. They were good at multi-tasking. They were nurturing and attentive. Staff members had good knowledge of the children's routines and they were attentive. Staff members assisted with handwashing.

Ms. Gambell states she plans to apply for an IQ4K level of 1 in the future.

Ms. Gambell states they work with great families. Even when they have concerns, they are understanding. She states they give grace where it is needed. She states they have a strong connection with families.

Ms. York states they now have parents they cared for as children.

Ms. Gambell states their younger staff members are dependable and they are willing to learn and jump in and do what needs to be done.

Ms. Gambell states the center has three vans and during the school year they provide transportation to the following schools: Cedar Heights, Southdale, Lincoln Cedar Falls, Hansen, North Cedar and Orchard Hill.

Administrators go to rooms frequently to make sure rooms remain in ratio.

There is an Alexa speaker in each room so that child friendly music can be played.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

109.9(2)h: Signed and dated valid Certificate of Immunization, Certificate of Immunization Exemption, or Provisional Certificate of Immunization, provided by the department must be on file for each child enrolled as required by Iowa Administrative Code 641—7.
There was one missing immunization certificate and two invalid immunization certificates. One was not signed and dated by medical personnel and one was not on the mandated Iowa Department of Health and Human Services certificate.

109.10(1): Medications: The center shall have written procedures for dispensing, storage, and authorization, and recording of all prescription and non-prescription medications.Staff must be over 18 to administer medication.All medications shall be stored in original containers with physician or pharmacist directions. Labels should be intact and stored so they are inaccessible to children and public. Nonprescription medications shall be labeled with the child's name.For every day an authorization for medication is in effect and child is in attendance, there shall be a notation of administration including the name of medicine, date, time, dosage, given or applied, and the initials of the person administering the medication or the reason the medication was not given.For ongoing, long term medications, authorization shall be obtained for a period not to exceed the duration of prescription.Staff shall not provide medications to a child if pre-service/orientation training for medication management has not been completed.
All nonprescription medications must be labeled.

109.10(14)a: The center and supervisor shall ensure that staff knows names and number of children assigned. Staff shall provide careful supervision.
I observed the teachers from the Teddy Bear room and Monkey room leave their rooms and walk into the bathroom very briefly, leaving their children alone in the classrooms. This can never occur.

109.12(4)b: Each infant and toddler shall be diapered in a sanitary manner as frequently as needed at a central diapering area. Diapering, sanitation, and hand-washing procedures shall be posted and implemented in every diapering area. There shall be at least one changing table for every 15 infants.
In the Bear Cubs room, the staff member is only washing children's hands with wet wipes. Soap and water must be used after every diaper change. In the Monkey and Teddy Bear rooms I observed concerns with diaper changes. There were no soap and water in the bathroom to clean the changing table between diaper changes. The Monkey teacher did not leave the bleach on the table for the necessary dwell time to disinfect the table. I did not see the Teddy Bear teacher clean or disinfect the changing table between children. Both classrooms take all the children from their classroom to the shared changing area. The Teddy Bear teacher left the children outside of the bathroom, where she could not fully supervise them while doing a diaper change. I observed the children hitting one another and playing with a light switch. The Monkey teacher brought the children into the bathroom for supervision but had a difficult time keeping the children in the bathroom. She would have to interrupt the diaper change, put the child down from the table and then go get the child who left the room.

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

N/A

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

A full license is issued. All DHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period.

The situation with how diaper changes are being done in the bathroom between the Teddy Bear room and the Monkey room must change. Staff members could not complete diaper changes without chasing children. In addition, all staff members must be trained in how to properly conduct diaper changes and how to clean and disinfect the table.

Make sure staff members know they can never leave children unattended in a room.

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An administrative change is being made to remove Jennifer Smith as an on-site supervisor.

Targeted Assessment: Behavior Management:
I discussed with Ms. Gambell and Ms. York their oversight of behavior management related to helping childcare staff: 1) Understand expectations, 2) managing frustrations, 3) monitor performance. Ms. Gambell states she goes over this information at staff meetings. She addresses steps to make and lets staff members know it is okay to ask for help. Ms. York states she tells them to get down on the child's level when talking with them. Ms. Gambell states she is good with difficult children so staff members often take the children to her office. She states she strives by, "You get to be mad, you don't get to be mean" to children or teachers. Children have the right to have feelings and the right to be mad. Ms. Gambell states a big thing with children who have behaviors is to give them the respect you expect from them. She states she attended an IAEYC conference and they said, "Don't expect from kids what is difficult for adults."

Ms. Gambell states she monitors the situation by going through the classrooms and listening. She states she knows which rooms the tough children are in so she checks in with those rooms more often and she keeps the parents informed. The teachers in those rooms may need more breaks and she will remove a child herself rather than make the teacher deal with it.

Date: 07/27/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Becky Frost

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**.