Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Little Paws Daycare

Provider No.: 39884

Address: 105 S East St, Manly, IA, 50456

County: Worth

Director's Name: Lori Jost

On-Site Supervisor: Jennifer Martin (lead PS), Brittney Guthart (Daycare)

Phone Number: 6414543283

E-Mail: ljost@centralsprings.net

HHS Visit Date: 10/28/2025

Licensing Period: 12/01/2024 to 12/01/2026

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 10/02/2025

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

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

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

- [ ] Accrediation

Program Duration:

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

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Program Population Served:

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General			40	56	96
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

An unannounced annual visit was made to the Little Paws Daycare on 10-28-25. Lori Jost is the program director who oversees this center and a sister program in Nora Springs. Brittney Guthard is the on-site supervisor for the daycare portion of the program. Jennifer Martin is the lead teacher for the preschool program. All are well qualified for the positions they hold based on their education, experience, and on-going training in early child care and education. Neither Lori or Brittney were on the day of the visit but was I was able to meet with Jennifer. This program is located in the Manly Elementary school building making use of four classrooms. The center provides formal preschool programming, daycare services, and before and after school programming during the school year. Enrollment varies with the before and after school programming being available to all children enrolled in the school on a drop-in basis. There are approximately 40 children enrolled in the preschool and daycare program at this time. All aspects of the program subject to licensing standards were reviewed.

The general layout of the building and facilities remains the same as in prior visits. The center uses four classrooms with one room for the preschool classes, one for meal service, and one for the daycare. The fourth room is being used as a teacher workspace and office area but does house some activity centers if additional space is needed for the daycare. The rooms have a typical school classroom layout design with a large open floor plan. Each room was observed to be clean with no concerns related to maintenance. Bathrooms are located off the main hallway and the teachers do escort the children to the restrooms when needed. Additional sinks are located in the classrooms to facilitate hand washing. Each room has windows on the exterior walls that also serve as secondary emergency exits. All exits were observed to be clear of obstruction. Each classroom makes use of furniture and play structures to define activity centers which are arranged so that they do not create any blind areas.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

Good interactions were observed on the day of the visit both in the preschool and daycare. I was able to see the end of the morning preschool class and the children transitioning to lunch and then daycare in the afternoon. The teachers in the preschool were actively presenting the planned curriculum which included a learning focus on pumpkins. This was reflected in the activities with the children having a special snack of pumpkin bars, a visitor from the county conservation office, and having carved a specific variety of pumpkin that had a cucumber scent. The daycare program also follows an established curriculum plan but uses a daily activity approach with Monday being Sensory, Tuesday Learning, Wednesday Free Choice, Thursday Craft, and Friday Games. The program makes use of positive behavior management techniques with using routines, transition activities, and reminders of expected behavior. After the preschool ended the morning session the children transitioned to lunch, and then nap time in the daycare portion of the program. There were a few minor behavioral

issues that did occur during the time of the visit which were easily addressed with simple redirection. There were noted differences between the teachers with some using very direct and authoritative tones when speaking to he children, and others using calmer and more encouraging tones. Ratio was maintained in the center as required for both the preschool and school age classroom.

Good health and safety practices were observed with the teachers escorting the children to the restroom to provide supervision and ensure that the children washed their hands and did so in an effective manner. First aid kits are present in each classroom and the kits do contain supplies necessary to address most common first aid needs. The program also has access to the school if needed for more serious health concerns, and to administer medications. Good cleaning practices were observed with the teachers sanitizing tables both before and after meal service. When cleaning tables the teachers did wait for the children to be out of the immediate area before using chemical cleaners. Cleaning products, personal belongings, and other items that could be safety risk to children were stored in areas inaccessible to the children. Cots were positioned so as provide spacing for access and to reduce disease transmission. All cots had appropriate bedding include cot covers and blankets which could be laundered as needed. Sufficient illumination was maintained in the room where children were resting to allow staff to observe the children. The staff did sit by children rubbing their backs to soothe and supervise the children.

Meals are prepared by the school and brought to the program in covered dishes. The center does participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. A refrigerator and some limited snack options are maintained in the classroom used for meal service. Good food storage and handling practices were observed. The items maintained in the classroom generally consist of prepackaged single serving snack options. A copy of the school menu was posted and the served meal was consistent with what was planned. Meals are pre-portioned for the children and good food service and handling practices were observed with the teachers wearing food service gloves and measured scoops. One issue that was noted was that teachers would ask children if they wanted a particular meal element and if children said no they were not served that item. When staff portion meals each child should be provided with a full serving of each element which they are then free to eat or not.

The center has a playground area intended for younger children, and also has access to the school playground area for older children. Both playground spaces have a variety of play and climbing structures and pea gravel is used for fall surfacing. While the school is responsible to maintain the physical facilities staff do need to conduct routing inspections to assess for safety concerns. Children need to be restricted from using those elements that are identified as not being safe. Shade is provided by the building, play structures, and trees in the grassy areas around the playgrounds. The preschool playground area is fully fenced and the school playground has a limited line of fencing along the highway that borders the property but that fence does not extend the full length of the property, nor does it enclose the playground. While it would be the responsibility of the school to install fencing it is recommended that adding additional fencing to at least enclose three sides if not fully enclose the playground would provide a safer play space.

In reviewing administrative records all required notices for No Smoking, License Certificate, Consultant Contact, and Mandatory Abuse Reporting were posted in an area that was readily visible and accessible to parents and visitors. Other required postings for emergency evacuation, emergency contacts, hand washing, curriculum, and daily schedule were also present. A random selection of child files were reviewed and of those each contained all required documentation. Staff files were not available for review at the time of the visit and a request was made for Lori to send scanned documentation via e-mail at a later date. That documentation had not been received as of the time of the completion of this report. Inspection logs and certificates were available and current for required systems with the exception of Emergency Drill practice. While Jennifer reported that emergency drills were being completed they were not being documented as required.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

A request was made for documentation of staff files to provided by 11-14-25. That information was not received by that date.

Emergency drills were reported to be conducted but not recorded.

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

A request was made for Lori to continue to work to provide the requested documentation for employee files, and either update records as needed or establish a date by which information was to be provided by staff.

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5. 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.

Date: 11/20/2025

HHS Licensing Consultant: Ray Salsbury

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**.