Health and Human Services

# Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

## CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Little Cougar Playhouse & Discovery Preschool

Provider No.: 22283

Address: 609 S Monroe, Wellsburg, IA, 50680

County: Grundy

Director's Name: Amy Weichers

On-Site Supervisor: Deb Saul

Phone Number: 6418693773

E-Mail: aweichers@agwsr.org lcp@agwsr.org

HHS Visit Date: 08/27/2026

Licensing Period: 11/01/2025 to 11/01/2027

---

**Fire Inspection:**

Date Inspected: 04/30/2024

Comments:

---

**Report Visit Type:**

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

**License Type:**

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

**Quality initiative:**

Quality Rating: 1

- [ ] Accrediation

**Program Duration:**

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

Health and Human Services

# Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

## CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

| HOURS: | *Year-round* | *School-Year* | *Summer Only* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sunday | | | |
| Monday | 6:30 AM to 6:00 PM | | |
| Tuesday | 6:30 AM to 6:00 PM | | |
| Wednesday | 6:30 AM to 6:00 PM | | |
| Thursday | 6:30 AM to 6:00 PM | | |
| Friday | 6:30 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 | 21 | 24 | 25 | 22 | 92 |
| Summer | | | | | 0 |

**1. Basic Overview**

An unannounced annual visit was made to the Little Cougar Playhouse & Discovery Preschool on 08-27-26 where I met with center director Amy Wiechers. The on-site supervisor Deb Saul, was not in on the day of my visit. Amy has been the director of a sister program in Ackley and took on the oversight of this program in 2018 and is now acting as an executive director over both centers. Deb became the on-site supervisor of this program in 2019. Both are well qualified for the positions they hold based on their experience in early childhood care/education, and on-going professional development. This program is located in the elementary school in Wellsburg and provides daycare and preschool programming to infants through school age children. The preschool programming does include both a formal 3 and 4 year old preschool class. The 4 year old class is operated under the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program. The 3 year old preschool program is operated under the DHHS License. There are 71 children enrolled in the program served by 9 staff. All aspects of the program subject to licensing standards were reviewed during the visit.

The overall layout of the center and programming remains the same as in prior visits. The program makes use of 5 classrooms with one being a designated formal preschool classroom. The majority of the classrooms are located in a single wing of the building which is separated from the classrooms used by the school. The designated preschool classroom is located in another wing of the building. The preschool classroom has an entry room for coat cubbies which also has restrooms and a door that opens to a corridor next to a direct exit to the outdoor playground. The room was estimated to be 40 ft x 27 ft determined by the tiles used in the suspended ceiling. This would provide a useable floor space 1080 sq.ft. allowing for a capacity of 30 children though the program typically caps enrollment at a lower number of children. In addition to the sinks in the restrooms there is an additional sink in the classroom to facilitate hand washing. Windows along the exterior wall provide ample natural light and a view of the outdoors.

## CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Each room of the daycare space has a large bank of windows along the exterior walls that provide ample natural light, a view of the outdoors, and ventilation. Each classroom has a secondary exit that either provides direct access to to the outdoors, or connects to another classroom. All exits were clear of obstruction and opened easily and freely. Each classroom has restroom facilities directly accessible from the programming space so that children do not need to leave the room. Each room has additional sinks available in the classroom to facilitate hand washing. The maintenance issues of excessive hot water temperatures, and missing electrical cover plates have been corrected. Activity centers are created in the classrooms through the placement of furniture, shelving, and play structures. It was noted that the infant room changed the layout arrangement with reducing the divided space to combine and increase the play area and sleeping area, and reducing the space used for the changing station and feeding area. This not only provides the children with more room to play but also improves the ability of staff to observe sleeping children. The gate system was also changed which improves access and reduces the risk of staff stepping over the barrier. The arrangement in each classroom is such that there were no blind areas. The toys and materials in each activity center were observed to be in good repair and appropriate to the ages of the children in the classrooms.

**2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program**

Programming & Engagement
Each classroom posted a copy of the daily schedule and while each also develops curriculum plans these were not posted but were kept in a notebook. These should either be posted, or the notebook left out where they are accessible to parents. Despite not being posted it was obvious that the teachers were following both. This included the teachers moving the children through activities such as large group teacher lead presentations, individual center play, meal service, and other activities. Good interactions were observed in each room with the teachers joining the children in their play and asking questions to help the children learn and explore. As an example in the 2-3 year old room the children were using Duplo block and the teachers reviewed colors, and asked what the children were building. Each presented calm and patient demeanors, used positive tones when speaking to the children, and proactive behavior management techniques of routines, positive recognition, and simple redirection with the children. Ratio was maintained in each classroom as required by age.

Health & Safety
Good health and safety policies and practice were observed during the visit. I was not able to observe a diaper change during the time of the visit were able to describe the procedures they follow which are consistent with required practices. Medications were properly labeled and stored.
Chemical cleaners, personal belongings, and other items that could pose a safety risk to children were stored in areas where they were not readily accessible. Good cleaning, and handwashing practices were observed. Safe sleep practices were followed for infants under 1 year of age. Good feeding position was observed for all children.

Playground
The playground is located in an inner courtyard area and is divided into several areas by chain link fencing. All fencing was observed to be in good repair. The daycare children only make use of two areas one of which one is used for the infants and toddlers. That playground space has a grassy area, and an area with a unitary pour in place fall surfacing. It was observed that toddler slide structures had been placed along the edge so that the slide chute discharged onto the fall surfacing but these need to be moved so that they have fall surfacing for the required fall zones of 6 ft. that extend in all directions. An awning structure is present to provide shade.

The other playground space used by the daycare has a small climbing structure which was observed to be in good repair. Pea gravel is used for fall surfacing in this area and has developed a hard pan layer which will need to be maintained either by aerating, or adding more material. In addition vegetation has infiltrated the fall surfacing reducing the fall zones to less than 6 ft in all directions. Use of climbing structures needs to be limited until such time that the fall surfacing issues have been corrected. Shade is limited to that which is provided by the building and play structure. The center does need to explore options to provide additional shade with options including planting trees, constructing a shade structure, or use of awnings or portable shade structures. There is a shed where additional toys and materials are stored and all of the equipment was observed to be in good repair.

Nutrition
The program does have a small kitchen area and meals are prepared on site. A menu is posted which does identify a good variety of nutritious meal options. Good food storage practices were observed for both dry pantry and refrigerated items.

## CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

The kitchen was clean with no evidence of any insect or rodent infestation. Staff wear food service gloves, and use measured scoops when serving meals. The children eat in the classrooms and the teachers provide supervision at the tables.

Administration
In reviewing administrative records all required notices for No Smoking, License Certificate, Consultant Contact, and Mandatory Abuse Reporting were posted in an area readily accessible and visible to all parents and visitors. Other required postings for emergency evacuation, emergency contacts, diapering, hand washing, schedule, and curriculum were posted. Staff and child files were reviewed and both were found to be in compliance for required documentation. Infant daily sheets were reviewed and while improved continue to be inconsistent with regard to documentation of daily Activity, and Disposition. The center is using the Playground communication application which does have the functionality to attach photographs and staff were using this as a visual depiction of both mood and activity, but were not doing this each day. It was reviewed that staff either need to include written descriptions or take photos of each child each day both morning and afternoon to show any changes in functioning. All required inspection logs and certificates were current and available.

**3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard**

109.11(4)a: Center must have safe outdoor program area adjacent to the center, with sufficient square footage to accommodate at least 30 percent of the enrollment capacity at any one time at 75 spear feet per child. Outdoor space must:Be free from litter and unsafe materials and free from contamination by the drainage or ponding of sewage or storm water.Include safe play equipment and an area of shade.Include fencing to protect from bodies of water or vehicular traffic. -- Fall surfacing was insufficient. Climbing structures for the toddler playground need to be moved so that they are fully encompassed by fall surfacing that extends 6 ft in all directions. The pea gravel of the preschool/school age playground space has developed a hard pan layer and children shall be restricted from using climbing structures until such time that the fall surfacing is aerated or supplemented to be compliant with requirements of the CPSC Public Playground Safety Handbook (https://www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/325_PublicPlaygroundSafetyHandbook2025_7-30-25_1.pdf?VersionId=tpCoaKp.DSdJ0QmD4_29kwEHeQgFphM2)

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

Amy stated she would restrict use of the climbing structures.

**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: 08/28/2026

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**.