Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: The Whistle Stop Academy

Provider No.: 16831

Address: 103 Campus Dr, Huxley, IA, 50124

County: Story

Director's Name: Keri Alleman/Amy Vandenburg

On-Site Supervisor: Janelle Fitzwater

Phone Number: 5155973637

E-Mail: whistlestop@huxcomm.net

HHS Visit Date: 08/20/2025

Licensing Period: 08/01/2025 to 08/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 02/13/2023

Comments: Fire inspections are due at least every three years; completed by Dept of Public Safety Andrew McCall.

Report Visit Type:

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

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

- [X] Accrediation — Comments: NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children)

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

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	26	18	40	42	126
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

The Whistle Stop Academy first opened in 1995. In 2000, they moved into the current building that was built specifically for child care. Keri Alleman is the owner and the co-director with Amy. Keri has a Bachelor's Degree and first started working in child care in 1987. She has owned The Whistle Stop Academy since 1995. The co-director is Amy Vandenburg. She has a degree in Elementary Education with an Early Childhood and Reading Endorsement. She started working part time at the center in 2006, and became full time in 2010. Janelle Fitzwater is the on-site supervisor. All meet qualifications for their roles.

The Whistle Stop Academy provides traditional fulltime and part-time childcare for newborn up to 12 years of age; which includes before and after
school care, and preschool (including universal preschool partnered with the local school) for approximately 149 (which is the total enrollment, some are part time).

Each classroom was observed to offer a variety of age/developmentally appropriate toys and play centers. The classrooms were nicely decorated with art work including the children's art work. Staff were in ratio and were consistently observed to be actively engaged with the children; either with leading a group activity or by helping with individual activities. The children were content. The children were resting when this visit occurred, right after lunch.

Lunches are prepared on site by a dedicated kitchen staff. Menus are crafted by the director and are in-line with CACFP food program guidelines for healthy eating. Infants eat in their room; other children come to the kitchen and eat cafeteria style along with staff.

The playground offers play equipment, shade structures and new this year is the "mud kitchen". The playground was in good repair; enclosed by chain link fencing and divided by ages.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

This center offers part time and full time care for families.

This center is able to provide care for urgent needs such as for families offering family foster care or other emergent, unforeseen circumstances.

The staff work well together as a team and have strong communication. The center is able to utilizes the WAGES program to assist staff with training and compensation. Child Care WAGE$® Iowa (WAGE$) is a salary supplement program offered by Iowa AEYC. WAGE$ works hand-in-hand with TEACH Early Childhood® Iowa. WAGE$ offers salary

supplements (also called stipends) to the early care and education workforce, based on the individual's level of formal education and commitment to their program -per IA Association for the Education of Young Children.

Their cook has been with them since 2002, and she is very much a part of the staff and the kitchen is her classroom.

The center has a strong reputation in the community.

This center makes good use of their room; consistently offering a variety of centers/activities to the children in each room.

The center has a secure entrance.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

109.7(2): Center directors and all staff have the required contact hours of training.
Some staff were noted not have have annual training completion certificates on file; the director indicated the staff were working toward completion and keeping this up to date in Ipower.

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. One staff was in need of repeat mandatory reporter training; which the director later provided the certification of completion shortly after the visit occurred.

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

N/A.

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

Radon testing is required every two years. The center last completed radon testing in June of 2022. All rooms fell below the 4.0 cutoff.

The furnace is inspected annually; there was a new unit installed in fall of 2022.

The children were observed to be content and engaged in teacher-lead activities. The classroom teachers maintained a good structure with nurturing responses.

Date: 08/29/2025

HHS Licensing Consultant: Maggie Gibson

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**.