Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Little Knights Learning Center-LPCC

Provider No.: 52675

Address: 515 Fillmore St, La Porte City, IA, 50651

County: Black Hawk

Director's Name: Jennifer Shaffer

On-Site Supervisor: Jennifer Shaffer

Phone Number: 3192399879

E-Mail: lklclpc@gmail.com

HHS Visit Date: 03/18/2025

Licensing Period: 01/21/2025 to 03/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 01/15/2025

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

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

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

- [ ] Accrediation

Program Duration:

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

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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	12	30	30	30	102
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

On 03/18/25 I made an unannounced licensing visit to Little Knights Learning Center in LaPorte City. I met with Tesha Dietrick, the director. Ms. Dietrick started as director in September 2024. She has an AA in child development and a BA in elementary education. She worked in Head Start for eleven years as a teacher and has previous childcare experience. Jennifer Shaffer is the on-site supervisor. She started in January 2025 and has previous childcare experience. She also worked in a Montessori school. The program employs five staff members in addition to Ms. Dietrick.

The center is in LaPorte City Elementary School. They were given permission to open on 01/21/25. The program operates Monday through Friday from 6:30 am until 5:30 pm. The center is currently serving children ages two-years-old through school-aged children; however, they will begin caring for infants in June 2025. The center will operate year-around. There are ten children enrolled in the center.

The center has four rooms to operate out of, but they are currently only using two of the rooms. One room cares for children who are two and three-years-old and one room cares for children who are four through school age. An inspection of each room was completed. Windows provide natural lighting. The rooms are decorated with the children's art projects, and posters to assist the children with the learning process, such as the alphabet and numbers. Rooms were within ratio during my visit.

The centers observed at the center include library, blocks/Legos, woodworking, table toys, games, puzzles, transportation, art, dramatic play, writing, math/patterns, science/discovery, Play-Doh, sensory table and magnets. Centers are clearly labeled. 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 were easily accessible to the children.

The program uses a variety of resources to complete lesson plans. Lesson plans are created around themes.

The program uses the Playground app to communicate with parents throughout the day and send them pictures.

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

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. I reviewed documentation of monthly playground inspections. A radon test was completed in February 2025 and must be repeated in five years. The results were within EPA guidelines. The building is geothermal and electric. There are no fuel burning inspections. A carbon monoxide detector was on site in

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each of the rooms. Outlets were protected. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 01/15/25.

The program does not participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). It does follow the CACFP guidelines. The program provides breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack. They use a four-week rotation of menus for breakfast and snack. Lunch is prepared by LaPorte City Elementary School. They provide the center a new lunch menu each month. On days where there is no school the childcare prepares lunch. Family style is used depending on what is being served. Menus were posted.

The center has an area to prepare food. There is a refrigerator and an upright freezer and thermometers were present. Disposable products are primarily used. Other dishes are washed using the dishwasher in the school kitchen. Food items were stored according to the NHSPS guidelines. Allergies are confidentially posted in the rooms.

The center uses bleach and water to sanitize food tables and disinfect the changing tables. I discussed a diaper change with staff members and proper procedures are followed. Each room has two sinks and two bathrooms that have one toilet each. Handwashing procedures were posted near all the sinks. There is a diaper changing table in the room for the younger children. Diaper changing procedures were posted.

Cots are used to nap in each room.

The program has a fenced in playground area they share with the school. Woodchips are used for fall surfacing. There is a piece of climbing equipment with slides, a climbing wall and a tunnel. There were playhouses in the area.

The parent information is located on a bulletin board inside the entrance. The mandatory reporter, childcare consultant and the handbook availability were posted. The letter giving the center permission to open without a license was conspicuously hung.

Staff and children files were reviewed at the time of the licensing visit. I reviewed five children files. They were in great condition.

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

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

Staff members were terrific with the children. The rooms were overstaffed due to low numbers, which provided a lot of attention to the children. A fire drill was practiced while I was present and the staff and children did a great job. Staff members were on the floor actively engaged in activities with the children. They encouraged them to use their imaginations. They talked with the children about sharing and using their words to communicate. They used positive redirection when necessary. They provided the children with praise and were nurturing. Child friendly music was playing in the rooms. Staff members modeled good manners and handwashing practices for the children. The children appeared to enjoy their time in the center.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

I think Ms. Dietrick will be an amazing director with her experience. She has great relationships with the staff members who work for her. She helps in classrooms as necessary. Her paperwork is organized and easy to review. She has several years of experience in childcare.

Ms. Dietrick states she has a strong group of staff members. She believes this will help her down the road as she hires more staff members. They current staff members will be good mentors for the new staff and they will help train them.

Ms. Dietrick states the center will meet the overall need for childcare in the community. There is a shortage with several in-home programs closing.

Ms. Dietrick states the are adding infant care in June 2025.

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Ms. Dietrick states she has reliable staff members.

Ms. Dietrick has been working with Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R).

The center is in a secured building and there are cameras in the rooms.

The center has a FB page and they communicate with the parents using the Playground app.

The center had one of the best initial licensing visits I have ever made.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

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.

An administrative change is being made to name Jennifer Shaffer as the interim director beginning 01/26/26. Tesha Dietrick's last day at the center is 01/23/26. Ms. Shaffer has four years of experience in childcare and has been the on-site supervisor for this program since January 2025.

Date: 01/20/2026

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**.