Iowa Department of Human Services
CHILD CARE CENTER EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE

Name of Center: Albert City After School Club **Enrollment:** 26 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 46328

Street: 300 Orchard St **City:** Albert City Iowa **Zip** 50510 **County:** Buena Vista

Mailing Address: PO Box 98, Albert City, IA, 50510

Director's Name: Ashley Dirks (principal) **Phone Number:** 712-843-5416

On-Site Supervisor(s): Deb Falkena (lead teacher) **E-Mail:** adirks@albertct.k12.ia.us

Date(s) of Visit: 01-27-2025

Licensing Visit X **Unannounced Visit** X **Off Year Visit** **Administrative Change**

LICENSING VISITS

New Application X **Re-Application** **NA**

Signed Application (470-0722) Received **Yes** **No** X **NA** **Date Signed:**

FIRE INSPECTION X **State** **Local** **NA** **Is Fire Inspection Approved?** X **Yes** **No** **NA**

Date Inspected: 09-07-2022

Comments :

LICENSE TYPE: X **Child Care** **Preschool (ages 3-5 meets three hours or less per day)**

Financial Type: Profit X Non-Profit NA

Accredition: Accredited NAEYC NSACA Other X NA

Program Serves: Infants (0-23 mo.) 2 Years Preschool-Age X School-Age

Get-Well Evening Care Special Needs

SCHEDULE: Year-round X School-Year Summer Only

HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General				24	24
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 02-01-2024 to 02-01-2026
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Raymond Salsbury **Date:** 02-14-2025

I. IF CURRENT LICENSE IS PROVISIONAL, IDENTIFY THE CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

NA

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

An unannounced annual visit was made to the Albert City After School program on 01-27-25 where I met with school principal and center director Ashley Dirks. Deb Falkena is the lead teacher/program supervisor but was not in on the day of my visit. Both are well qualified for the positions they hold based on their experience, education and training in early childhood education. Deb began with the program in 2015, and Ashley took over the director role in 2022. The program is located in and operated by the elementary school in Albert City. The program provides after school programming for the school age children only. There are approximately 26 children enrolled the after school program though not all attend on a regular basis, and the program is available to all students who attend the school. There are 6 teachers that work with the program and there are always at least two teachers present in the classroom. All aspects of the program subject to licensing standards were reviewed.

The afterschool program remains much the same as in prior visits both in terms of layout/design, and daily operation. The after school program is located primarily in one classroom that was previously used as a computer lab but also has access to other areas such as the gymnasium and library. The room has windows along the exterior wall that provides ample natural light, a view of the outdoors, and ventilation. The after school room has a secondary exit accessing a short hallway and another classroom. Bathrooms and hand washing facilities are located off the main hallway from the classroom. The classroom was observed to be clean with no issues noted due to design or maintenance. The room is a large open space divided into activity centers through the use of furniture, play structures, and low shelves. The arrangement is such that it does not create any blind areas. The equipment was observed to be in good repair and appropriate to the ages the children attending. A copy of the daily schedule and curriculum were posted on the day of the visit. The program uses a monthly theme approach to define a general learning concept.

Good interactions were observed on the day of my visit. The center continues to start the program with a large group activity of a peer reading a story, and then engaging in individual choice activity center play. The staff do provide support for the child that is reading as needed with activities such as holding the book, turning pages, and helping the child sound out words if needed. Later when the children are engaged in self-directed center play the teachers did talk and play with the children, but at times the supervision was more observational and focused with the teachers in the same area of the room. This did result in situations of the children beginning to engage in escalating and inappropriate behaviors but the teachers did intervene with redirecting the children, and having a focus on when behavior began to have a safety concern. Ratio was maintained as required with 2 teachers present until the number of children reduced that only one teacher was required in the room though Ashley did remain in the office to provide assistance if needed. One issue that did arise after the reduction to one teacher was when during snack time a child was sent to another room to retrieve juice boxes that would be provided. The center should either have the departing co-worker retrieve items that will be needed, ensure that no children need to be escorted to the restroom, and complete other routine tasks that may create an issue for a single teacher providing supervision. If situations do arise where children would need to leave the room the teacher would need to arrange to have the full class accompany them to ensure that they can provide supervision.

Good health and safety practices were generally observed but there are some practices that need to be reviewed. During the visit it was observed that staff had all of the children use hand sanitizer before entering the classroom. The hand sanitizer is

stored where it is accessible but use can be monitored by the teachers. Later when preparing for snack the staff again used hand sanitizer rather than taking the children to a restroom or sink where they could use soap and running water. While hand sanitizer can be an effective supplement to hand washing soap it is not a replacement when there there is access to soap and running water. The staff did use a sanitizing spray to clean tables prior to snack service. Chemical cleaners and other items that could pose a safety risk are stored in areas where they are not readily accessible. First aid kits are maintained in the classrooms and the program has access to the school office and nurse for both additional supplies and support. Medications are not routinely administered due to the limited hours of operation but the program does have policies in place should it become necessary in the future. The center does maintain emergency response plans for those children that have identified allergies and on-going health issues. Copies were maintained in the classroom where the teachers would have access but confidentiality could also be maintained. The center does have a secure entry with both a buzzer and camera that allow staff to observe parents and visitors prior to granting access. During the visit staff were observed to remind children that they are not to open the doors for people even if they recognize their or their friend's parents.

Due to the limited hours of operation meals are not prepared but snacks are provided. Snacks are typically prepackaged items such as crackers and100% juice. Good food storage and handling practices were observed for both dry pantry and refrigerated food items. The majority of snack items are single serving options. Items packaged in bulk were properly stored in air tight sealable food grade containers once the original packaging seal had been broken. The center does identify snack items typically offered and maintains a calendar of those items actually served.

The program makes use of the school playground which has a variety of climbing structures, paved areas, and grassy areas where the children can play. The playground was not reviewed during this visit due to weather conditions but the previous report noted that the equipment was found to be in good repair. The climbing structures use turf over loose fill material for fall surfacing which also covers a majority of the playground space. The after school program tends to make more use of the school gymnasium and a large motor skill room than the outdoor playground.

The required notices were Consultant Contact, Center License, and No Smoking posted in an area readily visible to parents and visitors, but the Mandatory Child Abuse Reporting notice was missing. A copy of that notice was sent to the center to repost. A review of child files found all required information to be current and present in each file. All staff files were reviewed and each contained all required documentation. All inspection logs and certificates were available and current but it was noted that Fire drills were only conducted and/or logged for August and October 2024, and Tornado drills for September and October 2024. It was reviewed with Ashley that both must be practiced and logged monthly although it is not a requirement to sound the alarms for each drill.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

Ashely identified that the program has had several updates that include new equipment and materials for the classroom including a wall mount for a TV to create a media center. Ashely stated that the center has also completed a grant to seek the installation of an AED device.

IV. IDENTIFY THE ASPECTS OF OPERATION THAT FALL BELOW THE STANDARDS REVIEWED:

109.4(3)b. Postings are required for mandatory reporter requirements, the notice of availability of the handbook required in subrule 109.4(5), and the program activities and shall be placed in an area that is frequented daily by parents or the public.
-- The required mandatory reporter notice was not present on the day of my visit.

109.10(8) The center shall ensure that staff assist children in personal hygiene sufficient to prevent or minimize the transmission of illness or disease. For each infant or child with a disability, a separate cloth for washing and one for rinsing may be used in place of running water. Children’s hands shall be washed at the following times: a. Immediately before eating or participating in any food service activity. b. After using the rest room or being diapered. c. After handling animals.
-- Children's hands were not washed immediately prior to eating. The center used hand sanitizer despite having access to running water and soap.

109.10(15)b. Emergency instructions, telephone numbers, and diagrams for fire, tornado, and flood (if area is susceptible to floods) shall be visibly posted by all program and outdoor exits. Emergency plan procedures shall be practiced and documented at least once a month for fire and for tornado. Records on the practice of fire and tornado drills shall be maintained for the current and previous year.
-- Emergency drills were not conducted/logged as required with drills only being identified as being completed for fire in August & October 2024, and for tornado in September & October 2024.

109.10(16) The center director and on-site supervisor shall ensure that each staff member, or volunteer knows the number and names of children assigned to that staff member, or volunteer for care. Assigned staff and volunteers shall provide careful supervision.

-- A child was sent out of the classroom without supervision to retrieve snack items. Children must be within direct line of sight/sound at all times.

V. 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.

*Note: If you are the Child Care Center Director and you feel something is unclear or unjustly cited, please contact your DHS Licensing Consultant to discuss the issue. The child care director may also send a response which will be placed in the licensing file.

*Note: If you are a member of the general public, there may be additional information contained in the public file. You may contact the DHS Licensing Consultant to inquire.