Iowa Department of Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER COMPLAINT

Name of Center: A Step Above Child Care and Learning Center, LLC **Enrollment:** 50 **License ID:** 50771

Street: 2882 Palo Marsh Rd Suite A **City:** Palo **IA** **Zip Code:** 52324 **County:** Linn

Mailing Address: 2882 Palo Marsh RD Suite A

Mailing City: Palo **IA** **Zip Code:** 52324

Director's Name: Michelle McKinstry **Center Phone Number:** 319-851-2671

On-Site Supervisors: Michelle McKinstry **E-Mail Address:** mgreenwalker01@gmail.com

Date of Complaint: 08-22-2023 **Date of Visit:** 08-24-2023

[ ] Scheduled **[X]** Unannounced **[ ]** NA

[X] Non-Compliance with Regulations Found **[ ]** Compliance with Regulations Found

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE

[X] NO CHANGES to licensing status recommended

[ ] PROVISIONAL license from **to**

[ ] SUSPENSION of License

[ ] REVOCATION of License

Complaint Details:

Did this complaint result in a serious injury? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Did this complaint result in a death to a child? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Summary of Complaint:

On 8/22/2023, a complainant reported from 6/19/2023 to 7/14/2023 high school kids were working in the infant room that did not want to take care of babies and knew nothing about babies. The complainant reported no staff want to work in the infant room so it's a constant rotation of high schoolers. The complainant reported at pick-up time the high schoolers were different everyday, could not answer any questions and just run away. The complainant reported babies went without diaper changes for 3-4 hours. The complainant reported there were several days babies were picked up in "poopy" diapers. The complainant reported one parent was told by the owner's son at pick-up he didn't know why their baby was crying as he doesn't know anything about babies. The complainant reported that baby was found to be in a "poopy" diaper at pick-up. The complainant reported babies were left to sleep in swings most of the day and even placed babies in swings to nap. The complainant reported on 7/14/2023, staff Macy reported it was the only way one baby will nap and will nap for over an hour. The complainant reported on 6/22/2023, the center had cases of hand, foot and mouth. The complainant reported one that same day, a baby was seen with another baby's pacifier in the mouth at pick-up time with the staff stating they didn't know how it happened. The complainant reported the owner is never at the center at drop-off or pick-up time and it's difficult for parents to find an adult staff. The complainant reported parents have to wait in the front area for a staff to either take their child back or bring their child up from the classroom rather than being able to drop-off or pick-up from their child's actual room.

Licensing Rules Relevant to the Complaint:

109.11(3)a Center shall ensure that: Facility and premises are sanitary, safe, and hazard free. Adequate indoor and outdoor space is provided. The outdoor area shall include safe play equipment and area of shade. Sufficient space provided for dining. Sufficient lighting shall be provided. Sufficient ventilation. Sufficient heating. sufficient cooling. Sufficient bathroom and diapering facilities. Equipment, including kitchen appliances, are maintained so as not to result in burns, shock, or injury to children. Sanitation and safety procedures for the center are developed and implemented to reduce risk or injury or harm to children and reduce transmission of disease.

109.12(5)b Infants diapered in a sanitary manner as needed in central diapering area.One changing table for every 15 infants/toddlers needing diaper changes.Diapering, sanitation, and handwashing procedures posted and implemented in central diapering area.

109.12(5)e The provider shall follow safe sleep practices recommended by AAP for infants under one year of age:Infants shall always be placed on their back for sleep.Infants shall be placed on a firm mattress with a tight fitted sheet that meets Consumer Product Safety Commission federal standards.Infants shall not be allowed to sleep on a bed, sofa, air mattress or other soft surface. No child will be allowed to sleep in any items not designed for sleeping but not limited to, an infant seat, car seat, swing, bouncy seat.No toys, soft objects, stuffed animals, pillows, bumper pads, blankets, or loose bedding shall be allowed in the sleeping area with the infant.No co-sleeping shall be allowed.Sleeping infants shall be actively observed by sight and sound.If an alternate sleeping position is needed, a signed physician or physician assistant authorization with statement of medical reason is required.

109.8(1)e Staff persons under age 18 who are not under supervision of adult shall only provide care to school aged children

Inspection Findings:

On 8/24/2023, licensing conducted an unannounced visit to A Step Above Child Care and Learning Center. The following has been determined based upon a face-to-face interview with owner-director Michelle McKinstry, a face-to-face interview with infant room adult staff Tammy P (shift daily M-F 6:00am-4:30pm being employed with the center for over a year), face-to-face interviews with 2 adult staff in the combined-age 1-2yo room (one staff reported this was her 3rd day; one staff reported being employed at this center for over 1 year), face-to-face interviews with 2 adult staff in the combined-age 2-3yo room (one staff reported her shift is daily M-F 7:00am-1:00pm; one staff reported her shift is daily M-F 8:00am-4:30pm; both reported being employed by the center for over 1 year), a face-to-face interview with one adult staff in the preschool-age room (shift daily M-F 8:00am-5:00pm being employed for 2 years with the center), review of administrative items, and observations while on-site:

109.8(1)e Staff persons under age 18 who are not under supervision of adult shall only provide care to school aged children. THERE IS NOT ENOUGH INFORMATION TO DETERMINE THIS OCCURRED. RULE NOT VIOLATED.
- Management and staff reported having 4 staff, under the age of 18yo employed over the summer, whom have gone back to high school or college. Management and staff reported currently having only 1 part-time staff who is under 18yo.
- Management and staff talked about how over the summer, the same 4 high-school staff worked primarily in the same room each day, with the same primary adult staff and with the same age group of children. Management discussed how all staff including those under 18yo who work with infants receive orientation and training specific to infant cares.
- Licensing, management and staff reviewed ratio rules related to staff under 18yo. Management and staff were knowledgeable of the license rule and denied leaving a staff under 18yo by themselves without an adult staff present.
- Management and staff interviewed each denied that anyone came to them, reporting any concerns, with any of their staff under 18yo.
- One staff interviewed talked about an incident in which a parent went to pick their child up from the classroom and began yelling at a child who was not theirs. Staff talked about how this incident prompted them to whenever possible, try to meet each family at the main entrance/exit for drop-off and pick-up. Staff went on to report that while they do this, there is nothing that prevents a family or parent from choosing to drop-off or pick-up at their child's classroom.
- Management and staff denied that anyone has expressed concerns to them about their drop-off and pick-up practices.

109.12(5)b Infants diapered in a sanitary manner as needed in central diapering area. THERE IS NOT ENOUGH INFORMATION TO DETERMINE THIS OCCURRED. RULE NOT VIOLATED.
- All staff interviewed were able to verbalize that diapers and pull-ups are checked every 2 hours, changed every 2 hours and changed more frequently as needed.
- Management discussed how it's possible there may have been times a child's diaper was not changed right at the 2-hour timeframe due to an infant's naptime or other infant cares being provided at that very moment. Management talked about how staff know they are to strive for as close to the 2-hour timeframe for diaper checks and changes as possible.
- Licensing observed staff to document infant cares (e.g. diaper changes, feedings) on a large wall-mounted whiteboard as well as in Brightwheel or the program's childcare management software. Management talked about how staff strive to keep up with documentation in Brightwheel throughout the day acknowledging there may be some lapse from when an infant care is completed to when it's entered into the software program.
- Management discussed how earlier this year there were some issues related to diaper changing frequency. Management talked about how when they became aware of diapering concerns they immediately addressed them with all staff, haven't had any diapering concerns brought to their attention since, and how they continue to verbally remind staff about frequency of diaper changes.

109.12(5)e The provider shall follow safe sleep practices recommended by AAP for infants under one year of age: Infants shall always be placed on their back for sleep. Infants shall be placed on a firm mattress with a tight fitted sheet that meets Consumer Product Safety Commission federal standards.

Infants shall not be allowed to sleep on a bed, sofa, air mattress or other soft surface. No child will be allowed to sleep in any items not designed for sleeping but not limited to, an infant seat, car seat, swing, bouncy seat. No toys, soft objects, stuffed animals, pillows, bumper pads, blankets, or loose bedding shall be allowed in the sleeping area with the infant. No co-sleeping shall be allowed. Sleeping infants shall be actively observed by sight and sound. If an alternate sleeping position is needed, a signed physician or physician assistant authorization with statement of medical reason is required. RULE VIOLATED.
- On 8/24/2023, licensing perused all rooms. No infants or children under the age of 2yo were observed to be sleeping in a swing or other infant container.
- On 8/24/2023, licensing did observe one infant sleeping in a crib with a noise canceling machine and a mushroom teether attached to their clothing by way of a beaded infant clip. Licensing, management and staff discussed how these items are not allowed in the crib for nap or sleep as well as how the beaded infant clip presents a choking-strangulation hazard. Management staff immediately made correction related to this.

109.11(3)a Center shall ensure that: Facility and premises are sanitary, safe, and hazard free. Sanitation and safety procedures for the center are developed and implemented to reduce risk or injury or harm to children and reduce transmission of disease. THERE IS NOT ENOUGH INFORMATION TO DETEMINE IF THIS OCCURRED. RULE NOT VIOLATED.
- On 8/24/2023, licensing observed storage of infant pacifiers to be sanitary. Licensing, management and staff interviewed also discussed the program's policies and procedures related to cleaning of pacifiers.
- Management and staff talked about hand, foot and mouth being a communicable illness in the center at the end of the school-year/beginning of summer. Management and staff denied any sharing of pacifiers happened during that time or at any other time.
- Management and staff interviewed each denied that anyone came to them, reporting any concerns related to pacifier usage or that an infant had the wrong pacifier. One staff in the combined-age 1-2yo room acknowledged watching the children closely as there is one child who does like to pull pacifiers out of other children's mouths.

Special Notes and Action Required:

Please review rule 109.12(5)g which states infant walkers shall not be used.

While observing in the combined-age 1-2yo room, licensing observed the children wanting to sit underneath the floating wall-mounted sink. The floating wall-mounted sink is at a height where children of this age have the potential to hit their head. Please remedy to prevent a head injury hazard.

Please reconsider the usage of tension rods with longer curtains in front of the secondary exit doors. This may not meet fire code as well as creates a topple-head injury hazard if a young child pulls on the curtains and then inadvertently pulls the tension rod down.

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Based upon the above, no response to this report is requested.

*Note: If you are the Child Care Center Director and you feel something is unclear or unjustly cited, please contact your HHS 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 HHS Licensing Consultant to inquire.

Consultant's Signature:

Amy Lyons

Date:

08-31-2023