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

Name of Center: Exploration & Learning Station **Enrollment:** 67 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 51214

Street: 116 N Division ST **City:** Stuart Iowa **Zip** 50250 **County:** Guthrie

Mailing Address: PO BOX 387, Stuart, IA, 50250

Director's Name: Alicia Geil **Phone Number:** 515-523-1150

On-Site Supervisor(s): N/A **E-Mail:** explorationlearningstation@gmail.com

Date(s) of Visit: 01-18-2024

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

LICENSING VISITS

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

Signed Application (470-0722) Received X **Yes** **No** **NA** **Date Signed:** 12-30-2022

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

Date Inspected: 11-19-2021

Comments : State Fire Marshal inspections are due at least every three years.

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

Financial Type: X Profit Non-Profit NA

Accredition: Accredited NAEYC NSACA Other X NA

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

Get-Well Evening Care Special Needs

SCHEDULE: X Year-round School-Year Summer Only

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General	24	13	30	0	67
Summer					0

QRS Rating: 4

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 02-01-2023 to 02-01-2025
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Nate Knepper **Date:** 01-18-2024

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

N/A.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

An off-year visit was conducted on 1/18/24. The owner/director was present throughout the visit.

All areas of the program were observed. These areas observed consisted of classroom observations and activities, ratios, nutritional practices, health and safety practices, playground observation (not thoroughly because of snow cover), field trip and transportation practices, and administrative review. The most recent COVID updates were also reviewed.

Exploration and Learning Station is a center in Stuart, IA that was given permission to open on 10/12/20. The center opened a second building on the same block (campus definition) in 11/2021. The center serves children who are six weeks in age through roughly five years in age. The center uses the Creative Learning Curriculum in their teaching of children. There is one big open area in the first building and three classrooms in the second building. Infant capacity is 24 children. Two year old capacity is 13 children. Preschool capacity is 30 children. Total capacity is 67.

The owner/director of the center is Alicia Geil. Alicia has a Master's degree in Special Education and a Bachelor's degree in K-6th Teaching. Alicia has past experience working in the school setting as a teacher as well as running her own registered in-home daycare in the past.

During the visit, children in the first building were engaged in free-choice play at the different learning stations made available to them. There were three staff members and they were spaced out in the building/classroom and interacting with the children. In the second building, children were observed napping in cribs and engaged in free-choice play at the learning stations made available to them. Staff were again observed spaced out in classrooms and sitting on the floor interacting with the children.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

This is a center that meets a need in the community. The center is looking to expand their campus setting by possibly looking into a third building in the same neighborhood. Enrollment has again increased over the past year.

The director has past experience working in child care and is organized.

The center uses the Bright Wheel online application for increased communication with parents. Parent Teacher Conferences are also held in the Spring.

The center works with the Family Resource Center on a regular basis.

Good child/staff interactions were observed and overheard throughout the entire visit.

The owner stated she believes she has a good staff and that staff work well with each other. There are mostly tenured staff at this location.

Staff are eligible for benefits (health and insurance).

The center has good community partnerships.

The center participates in IQ4K (which is the new voluntary program based on best practice taking the place of QRS).

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

237A.7: Information regarding a child in a child care center or their relative is confidential. If this information is released by visual, verbal or written means, written consent from the parent or guardian is in the file or a court order allowing the release of the information.
Medication forms/clipboards should have cover sheets over them. This was an issue in two classrooms.

109.11(3)a: Center shall ensure that: Facility and premises are sanitary, safe, and hazard free. 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.
There was a dangling phone cord above the diaper changing table in the first building that needs to be more securely fastened to the wall.

109.15(5)b: Sanitary and safe methods in food preparation, serving, and storage sufficient to prevent transmission of disease, infestation, and spoilage are followed.
There were two issues with dry food storage not being sealed sufficiently in the kitchens.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Radon testing was last conducted 12/30/22 - 1/3/23 and 1/13/23 - 1/17/23. All classrooms came back with radon levels below the 4.0 cutoff. Because levels were below 4.0, the center can move to testing for radon at least every five years now. So long as radon levels remain below 4.0, they can remain on a five year plan. If at the next testing, levels in any classroom come back 4.0 or higher, the center will have to have a mitigation plan, retest, and at least temporarily move back to testing every two years.

The annual furnace inspection was last completed 12/29/23.

There is a built in carbon monoxide detector in the first building. The second building has a carbon monoxide detector in place attached to a wall.

For transportation/field trips, the center now has three passenger vans. Children two and older are eligible for field trips. The center provides booster seats for children. The van on site was observed during the visit

The information "UNLESS RESTRICTED BY A COURT ORDER" is still needed in the parent handbook as far as parents access to the center, staff, and children during center hours of operation. This was mentioned at last year's visit, but not checked at this year's visit.

The center has extra No Smoking signs and one is needed in the center van observed as it had been torn down.

*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.