Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: AFES Youth Center

Provider No.: 17941

Address: 712 3rd ST NW, Fort Dodge, IA, 50501

County: Webster

Director's Name: Charles Clayton

On-Site Supervisor: Shawana Ricklefs

Phone Number: 5155710529

E-Mail: ourafes@hotmail.com

HHS Visit Date: 06/22/2026

Licensing Period: 09/01/2026 to 09/01/2028

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 09/19/2023

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

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

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

- [ ] Accrediation

Program Duration:

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

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HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday	7:30 AM to 6:30 PM		
Tuesday	6:30 AM to 6:30 PM		
Wednesday	7:30 AM to 6:30 PM		
Thursday	7:30 AM to 6:30 PM		
Friday	7:30 AM to 6:30 PM		
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

- [ ] Infant(0-<24 Months)
- [ ] Toddler
- [X] PreSchool
- [X] School Age
- [ ] All Ages

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General				281	281
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

An unannounced annual visit was made to the AFES Youth Center on 06-22-26 where I met with the center director, Charles Clayton amd on-site supervisor Shawna Ricklefs. Both are well qualified for the positions they hold based on their experience and on-going professional development. The program is located in the old Hillcrest Elementary building in Fort Dodge and is operated as a non-profit entity overseen by a board of directors. The program primarily provides after school and summer programming for school age children. There are 49 children that are enrolled in the program served by 9 staff. This facility also acts as a community recreation, and resource center providing space for other programs and activities. This includes a food pantry, sports leagues, and other summer programs for older school age children and adolescents but those programs are not included in the licensed programming and were not in operation on the day of my visit. The center does have polices and procedures in place to ensure the supervision of the children in the licensed programming when other groups are present. All aspects of the program subject to Licensing Standards were reviewed during the visit.

The layout of the building and classrooms remains the same as in the prior visit. The center is currently making use of 4 classrooms of the building along the west wing for child programming. The program also makes use of the gymnasium which is in a separate building on the same property. Each classroom has restroom facilities and additional sinks in the room so that children do not need to leave the room. The rooms have a traditional school classroom open floor plan. One room does have a temporary construction within the main classroom that created a smaller room which is used for storage. Each room has a large bank of windows along the exterior walls which provide natural light, ventilation, a view of the outdoors, and also serve as secondary emergency egress. One classroom did have OSB boards covering the windows with the exception of the evacuation window. Access to all exit windows was maintained so that they were clear of any obstruction. There were some maintenance issues but none rose to the level of being an immediate safety concern.

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2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

Child Interaction & Programming
The center curriculum plan has a focus on physical activity/sports as means to develop self-discipline and positive social interactions. The program also seeks develop and maintain school readiness skills with homework assistance during the school year and math/science worksheets. During the visit much of the observed interactions between staff and children were observational. While not rising to the level of being a violation it did lead to situations where there was a potential for concerns. As an example upon arrival all of the children and staff were in the gym where the children were engaged in self-directed play with many of the children engaged in basketball activities. The staff were positioned on one end of the building near the entrance. During the time the children were playing one older child was observed to have a conflict with a younger peer and slap that child in the face. This situation was either unnoticed or ignored by staff but it does highlight that having more engaged interaction would allow staff to be more strategically positioned and better able to respond to the children's needs. Later the children were split into classrooms by age groups which did reduce both the numbers and area that staff were responsible to supervise. This did allow for more interaction such as direct conversation, and meal service. The center does follow a positive behavior support approach to behavior management using routines and reminders of expected behavior, redirection, and guided problem solving. Ratio was maintained as required in the center.

Health & Safety
Good hand washing practices were observed on the day of my visit with staff and children washing their hands as needed. During the visit one child was observed to have a cast and told staff they could not get it wet when directed to wash their hands before breakfast. The staff did tell them to wash as best they could. Chemical cleaners, medications, personal belongings, and other items that could pose a safety risk to children were stored where they were secure. Medications are stored in a locked cabinet in the center office. Documentation is maintained and posted for children that have identified health concerns. First aid kits were present and while those in classrooms needed to be replenished the center did have a larger kit near the program office with the materials necessary to address most common first aid needs.

Playground
The center has an outdoor playground that consists of a large open space with a paved area, and a grassy area. There are no climbing structures present on the playground. The space is partially fenced. Shade is provided by the building and mature trees along the edges of the playground. The center does have balls, toys, and other materials that can be taken out to the playground. In addition to the outdoor playground area the center has access to a large gymnasium space that the children can use when weather conditions do not allow for outdoor play.

Nutrition
The center does have a full kitchen where meals can be prepared on-site. Good food storage practices were observed for both dry pantry and refrigerated items. The center has several refrigerators and freezers and each had a thermometer present to ensure proper cold holding temperatures were maintained. The kitchen was observed to be clean and while the center did have traps and other control methods present for common household pests there was no evidence of insect or rodent infestation. A copy of the menu was posted and identified a good variety of credible meal options. Breakfast was served during the visit and was consistent with the planned meal. The staff serving the meals did wear food service gloves and used measured scoops to portion meals.

Administration
In reviewing administrative records all required notices for No Smoking, License Certificate, Consultant Contact, and Mandatory Abuse Reporting were present and posted at several notice boards throughout the center. Child files were reviewed and all were found to contain all required documentation. Staff files were also reviewed and found to contain all required documentation. All required inspection logs and certificates were current and available. The center does have several center owned vehicles used for transportation and does maintain service records to show that they are in good working order. The parent handbook was reviewed and found to have policies that needed to be added or expanded to ensure that all required elements were present.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

109.4(1): Written policies on: Enrollment and discharge. Field trips and non-center activities. Discipline/Behavior/Biting.

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Nutrition. Health and safety policies. Transportation if applicable. Assurance people do not have unauthorized access to children at the center. Protecting children's confidentiality.
-- Policies either need to be added or expanded to include all required elements for Health & Safety (handwashing), Incident Reporting (injury, significant change, sexualized behavior), Staff Orientation/Training, Access (parents, visitors, sex offenders), Confidentiality, Emergency Response Plans.

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

A list of all required written policies with suggestions for implementation was provided to the center.

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

A full license is recommended at this time at this time. Please provide a written response to the licensing consultant identifying a plan of action to correct those aspects cited as not meeting licensing standards and identifying an anticipated date of compliance.

6. ADDENDUMS:

- Addendum1: An updated parent handbook was received on 07-26-26

This Addendum is approved by supervisor on 7/30/2026 3:58:46 PM

Date: 07/08/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Ray Salsbury

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**.