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

Name of Center: Sunflower Child Development & Discovery Center **Enrollment:** 105 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 19264

Street: 902 Commerce Drive **City:** Decorah Iowa **Zip** 52101 **County:** Winneshiek

Mailing Address: 902 Commerce Drive, Decorah, IA, 52101

Director's Name: Holly Benda & Amy Winter **Phone Number:** 563-382-5717

On-Site Supervisor(s): Holly Benda & Amy Winter **E-Mail:** holly.benda@sunflowerchildcare.org

Date(s) of Visit:

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

LICENSING VISITS

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

Signed Application (470-0722) Received X **Yes** **No** **NA** **Date Signed:** 06-06-2024

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

Date Inspected: 06-06-2024

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

Get-Well Evening Care Special Needs

SCHEDULE: X Year-round School-Year Summer Only

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General	51	24	80	60	215
Summer					0

QRS Rating: 1

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 04-01-2023 to 04-01-2025
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Becky Frost **Date:** 06-27-2024

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

N/A

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

On 03/05/24 I made an unannounced off year licensing visit to Sunflower Child Development Center in Decorah. I met with Holly Benda, the Executive Director. Ms. Benda started with the program in June 2021 and became the director in May 2023. Ms. Benda is NAC certified and an IAAEYC member. Amy Winter is a co-director and she is the Director of Education and Programming. Ms. Winter has a BA in elementary education with an early childhood and reading endorsement. Ms. Winter is currently the lead teacher for the voluntary four-year-old preschool program. Daiton Johnson is the Director of Operations for the center. Ms. Johnson has been with the program since August 2018 and has worked in various rooms during her time at the center. The center employs 38 employees.

Sunflower Child Development Center was started in 1975 and operates out of a free-standing building. The program operates Monday through Friday from 6:30 am until 5:30 pm. The center serves infants through school-aged children and is open year-around. There are currently 105 children enrolled. The center had an IQ4K level 1 that expires on 10/31/24.

The center operates out of the following rooms: Ducklings (birth until approximately 13 months old), Chipmunks (approximately 13 to 24 months), Otters (two-year-olds), Owls (three-year-olds), Fox (four-year-old preschool) and Wolves (school-aged). An inspection of each room was completed.

Windows provide natural lighting. The rooms are decorated with multiple pictures of the children and their families, the children's art projects, and posters to assist the children with the learning process, such as the alphabet, shapes, colors and numbers. The children's birthdays were posted. There is an area for circle time in the rooms.

The centers observed on the day of the licensing visit include library, Lego/blocks, table toys, games, puzzles, transportation, computers/Ipads, puppets, Play-Doh, art, dramatic play, listening, writing, math, science/discovery, woodworking, sensory table and music. 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.

There was a child in the infant room wearing a teething necklace. These are considered a choking and possible strangulation hazard and are not allowed.

The Sunflower Child Development Center partners with the Decorah School District to provide the voluntary four-year-old preschool program. The voluntary preschool program meets on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 8:00 am until 1:00 pm. Amy Winter is the lead teacher for the preschool program.

The preschool program uses the Creative Curriculum to develop lesson plans and completes the GOLD assessments. Ms. Winter also uses additional resources to create lesson plans, such as Heggerty Phonemic Awareness, Alpharady by Dr. Jean and Alphatales. Activities are planned around studies. The preschool program participates in the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards (QPPS). The other rooms use Creative Curriculum and a variety of resources to develop lesson plans. The length of the study depends on the topic and the children's interest. Lesson plans were available for review in every

room.

The program uses the ProCare app to communicate with parents. Daily sheets for the children under the age of two-years-old are completed in the app. Staff members and parents enjoy the app.

There was a phone with emergency numbers in all the classrooms. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and evacuation diagrams were posted by 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 2023 and is good for two years. Results were within EPA guidelines. The fuel burning inspection was completed in February 2023 and no concerns were noted. Ms. Benda has contacted them to complete a new inspection. A carbon monoxide detector was on site and is in the Fox, Chipmunk and Owl rooms. Outlets were protected. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 02/06/23 with compliance on 02/15/23.

The program participates in the Farm to Early Childhood Education (F2ECE) program. They have a weekly curriculum for the program that incorporates new foods each month. It also incorporates a weekly fitness program as part of F2ECE. Darla Schnuelle oversees the program, and she does an amazing job. She creates lesson plans and incorporates several fun activities into the program that include both tasting and cooking.

The center participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). They serve breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. Shelly Dolley is the cook. She started with the program in November 2022. She has completed the Serv Safe class and has her Certified Board for Dietary Managers (CBDM) certificate. She has worked in the food service industry for 37 years. She uses a four-week rotation of menus that rotate three times a year, so the menus are seasonal. The children eat in their classrooms. They are currently using family style.

The center provides one brand of formula, baby food and cereal to the infants. If parents want a different brand, they must provide it. Bottles are prepared in the room. The parents have the choice of taking the bottles home or leaving them at the center where they are put through the dishwasher in the kitchen.

There is a refrigerator present in the infant room, Chipmunk room and the Otter room and thermometers were present.

The kitchen was observed to be clean and organized. Menus and allergies were posted. Menus and dietary restrictions are also posted in the rooms. There are multiple refrigerators and upright freezers in the kitchen and thermometers were present. The dishes are put through an industrial dishwasher. There are three industrial sinks available to hand wash dishes using the three-step method if necessary. I observed the pantry. Food is kept off the floor. Food items were stored according to the NHSPS guidelines.

The center uses bleach and water to sanitize food tables and Purell Professional Surface Disinfectant to disinfect the changing tables.

I observed and discussed diaper changing procedures with staff members and procedures are followed. In the Otter room they were not cleaning the changing table with soap and water prior to the disinfectant. This must always occur.

There are multiple bathrooms, sinks and changing tables throughout the center and handwashing and diaper changing procedures were posted.

Cribs are used to nap for infants and then children transition to cots.

The parent information is located on a bulletin board inside the entrance. The mandatory reporter, childcare consultant and the handbook availability were posted. The license was conspicuously hung. A no-smoking sign was posted at the entrance.

The playground is divided into three fenced in areas. There is an area for children aged two and under that is located directly outside the Duckling and Chipmunk rooms. There is small climbing equipment with a slide. Rubber tiles are used as the surface cushioning. There is also a grassy area to play on and teachers take out more items outside to play with when it is warmer. A tree is available to provide shade.

There is a large fenced in area for children two through preschool. Rubber tiles are used for surface cushioning. There is climbing equipment with slides and a climbing wall. There is a riding path that was made using tires. Riding toys are available. There is a sandbox. There is also a large grassy area for the children and trees are available for shade.

The third section is for school-aged children. Poured rubber is used for surface cushioning. There is a piece of climbing equipment with slides and other activities. There is a separate area with a climbing wall and pea gravel is used in this area

for fall surfacing. There is also a cemented basketball area for the children. A tree provides shade. There is a large grassy area.

Staff members were fabulous with the children. They were enthusiastic and provided the children with praise. They had great teamwork and routines. They were actively engaged in activities with the children. I observed staff members on the floor introducing the children to activities. They used play to help teach the children numbers and colors. Staff members were nurturing and held children on their laps as the read books and played. Staff members took pictures of the children to post on the ProCare app. Staff members assisted the children with washing their hands. The infant room staff members worked on tummy time and other developmental milestones. I enjoyed my time at the center. The children appeared to enjoy their time at the center.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The program has an IQ4K level of 1 that expires on 10/31/24.

The center has started construction on a new childcare center. The groundbreaking was on 10/18/22. They received federal rejuvenation grant through the Department of Health and Human Services to help with the funding. They plan to open in the new building on 06/10/24.

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

Ms. Benda states they are excited to move into the new building. She states they are “upping their game”. She states they want to take the center to a whole new level and increase their expectations. Staff members will wear clothing with the center’s logo and they will present a more professional appearance. The staff are on board and are excited.

Ms. Benda states they have a dedicated group of staff members.

The program has an amazing Farm to Early Care and Education (F2ECE) program that they provide to all their students. They have a great curriculum and a staff member dedicated to the program. The new building has a “learning kitchen” where they will be able to do more with tasting new foods and cooking. The center is working with a local grower so they have fresh vegetables for the children.

The center added professional development days for staff members has been added to the parent contract twice a year allowing them to accomplish more requirements within the workday timeframe.

The program works with Keystone AEA to address concerns for children with identified needs and to get resources.

The Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SWVPP) continues to foster collaboration with all Decorah preschool partners. The preschool has parent/teacher conferences twice each year.

The program provides the children with a fitness program once each week. They have a “Singing with Sue” music program that meets with all the children every other week. Ms. Benda would like to offer more “specials” such as science experiments.

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

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

A full license is issued for the remainder of the licensing period. All DHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period.

The program has a newly constructed childcare building that they plan to start in on 06/10/24. It will have a capacity of 215 children.

An administrative change is being made to change the address of the center to 902 Commerce Drive in Decorah. They started at this location on 06/10/24. The new space has a program of 204 children based on the floor plan. The hours of the program are 7:00 am until 5:30 pm. The name was changed to Sunflower Child Development & Discovery Center.

On 06/27/24 an administrative change is being made to correct the total capacity to 215 children.

*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.