Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Sugar Babies South

Provider No.: 52702

Address: 2102 King AVE, Des Moines, IA, 50320

County: Polk

Director's Name: Lenae Arku

On-Site Supervisor: Samika Gates

Phone Number: 5154280082

E-Mail: sugarbabiesacademyabc123@gmail.com

HHS Visit Date: 04/28/2026

Licensing Period: 03/01/2025 to 03/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 09/24/2024

Comments: Des Moines Fire Marshal.

Report Visit Type:

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

License Type:

- [ ] Full
- [X] 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	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Tuesday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Wednesday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Thursday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Friday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	28	14	36	18	96
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

Sugar Babies South opened on 11/1/24. The center is located in a secured building. An apartment office occupies the other side of the building. The center serves children six weeks in age through 12 years in age. The center uses their own learning curriculum based off of other learning curriculums. There are a total of six classrooms, but not all of them are currently in use. There are five girls toilets in girls restroom and five boys toilets in the boys restroom. Capacity of the infant classroom is 13 children. Capacity of the toddler classroom is 15 children. Capacity of the two year old classroom is 14 children. Capacity of the three year old classroom is 16 children. Capacity of the four/five year old classroom is 20 children. Capacity of the school-age classroom is 18 children. Lenae Arku is the owner/director of this center. Lenae owns three other daycare centers in the Metro area. The center's on site supervisor is Samika Gates.

An unannounced visit was completed on today's date. Samika assisted with today's visit. The infant classroom had seven infants present. Two staff were working in this classroom. There were some licensing violations observed in this classroom, such as infants strapped in bumbo seats and standing in cribs watching videos, which wasn't listed on the schedule. There were four toddlers present in the 1's classroom. One staff was working with this age group. Five children were in the 2/3's class. There was one staff working with this class. Seven children were present in the 3/4's classroom. One staff was working in this room.

The playground was observed. The playground isn't being used at this time. Samika said the center is using a few city parks that are near to the center. The playground has thistles and weeds throughout the grounds. There needs to be more rubber mulch added to the areas needed to surfacing. There are the shade structures in place but there is no tarp or material on the structures. Samika wasn't sure the last time the playground had been used.

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The center doesn't participate in CACFP but follows requirements. All the Sugar Babies centers have the same menu. Menus have been reviewed and show compliance. The kitchen was viewed. Samika said she is currently doing the majority of the cooking for the center.

The center doesn't provide transportation. The center walks to some field trips. There are a few school age children, who are walked from the school to the center by the school's staff.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

This center is one of four owned by Ms. Arku.

The center uses Brightwheel for billing, daily sheets and communication with parents.

Monthly staff meetings are planned.

The center utilizes CCR&R (Childcare Resource and Referral) as needed.

The owner stated she is currently looking at formal participation in CACFP (Federal Food Program).

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

109.4(1)b: Curriculum or program structure developmentally appropriate and activities designed to the developmental level/needs of children served.
Infants were sitting in front of a video of Ms. Rachel. Some of the children, who were strapped into the bumbo seats, were too old/big, to be using bumbo seats. Two children were standing up in cribs watching the TV.
Children were running around in the 2's classroom. Staff was reacting to children's behaviors rather than engaging the children in play and/or learning activities.

109.7(1): All staff (within first three months of employment):Iowa's training for the mandatory reporting of child abuse.At least one hour of training regarding universal precautions.Certification in First Aid infant, child, and adult cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) or equivalent certification approved by the Department. A valid certificate indicating the date of training and expiration date shall be maintained.Certification in infant, child, and adult first aid that uses a nationally recognized curriculum or is received from a nationally recognized training organization including the American Red Cross, American Heart Association, American Safety and Health Institute, or MEDIC First Aid or an equivalent certification approved by the Department. A valid certificate indicating the date of training and expiration date shall be maintained.Minimum health and safety trainings, (Essentials) approved by the Department. If significant changes occur to content, the Department may require the training be renewed.
REPEAT VIOLATION
Staff files were missing certificates to show mandatory trainings were current and/or completed.

109.9(1)a: All files contain:Copy of a department criminal history record check form or any other permission form approved by Department of Public Safety for conducting an Iowa or national criminal history record checkCopy of a request for child abuse information form, when applicable.Copies of results of Iowa record checks conducted through the SING for review by the department upon request.Copies of national criminal history check results.Any department issued documents sent to the center related to a record check, regardless of findings.
REPEAT VIOLATION
Staff files didn't have federal record checks.

109.9(1)b: All files contain a pre-employment physical exam report completed within six months prior to hire and at least every three years. Physical exams shall be documented on form 470-5152, Child Care Provider Physical Examination Report.
Some staff files didn't have physicals.

109.9(1)c: All files contain documentation to indicate that ongoing staff training requirements are met, including current

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certifications in first aid/CPR and mandatory child abuse training.
Some staff files didn't have certificates for required trainings.

109.9(2)d: All files contain sufficient information and authorization to allow the center to secure emergency medical and dental services at any time child is in center's care.
Some children's files were missing medical and/or dental information.

109.9(2)i: Preschool (for children five years and younger not enrolled in school): Physical exam report submitted within 30 days of admission, was obtained no more than 12 months prior to admission, is signed by a licensed MD, DO, Chiropractor, PA, or ARNP, and contains health history; present health status including allergies, medications, and acute/chronic conditions; and recommendations for continued care if necessary.
Some children's files were missing physicals and/or current physicals.

109.10(5): Staff hand washing: The center shall ensure staff demonstrate clean personal hygiene sufficient to prevent or minimize the transmission of illness or disease.
Staff didn't wash their hands after changing child's diaper.

109.10(13)b: Emergency instructions, phone numbers, and diagrams for fire, tornado, and flood shall be visibly posted and documented at least once a month for fire and tornado. Records shall be maintained for current and previous year.
Emergency drills weren't documented for March 2026.

109.11(2)b: Program space must meet the following conditions:Room must be arranged so as not to obstruct the direct observation of children by staff.Individual covered mats, bed, or cots and appropriate bedding will be provided for all children who nap.Equipment and materials are maintained in a sanitary manner.Sufficient spacing must be maintained.The center will have sufficient toilet articles for each child for hand washing.
In the 1's classroom, staff had four children resting on cots with no spacing between the cots.

109.11(4)a: Center must have safe outdoor program area adjacent to the center, with sufficient square footage to accommodate at least 30 percent of the enrollment capacity at any one time at 75 spear feet per child. Outdoor space must:Be free from litter and unsafe materials and free from contamination by the drainage or ponding of sewage or storm water.Include safe play equipment and an area of shade.Include fencing to protect from bodies of water or vehicular traffic.
REPEAT VIOLATION
The playground isn't usable at this time. The center hasn't maintained the playground. There are thistles throughout the playground. There is inadequate depth of rubber mulch. The center doesn't have shade coverings for the shade structures.

109.11(8)b: Centers at ground level that use basement area as program space, or have a basement beneath program space: Testing and plan for remedy of radon is conducted.
REPEAT VIOLATION
The center was supposed to complete radon testing by November 1, 2025, per the last annual report. Radon testing has not been completed.

109.11(8)c: All centers: Annual inspection prior to heating season of all fuel-burning appliances to reduce risk of carbon monoxide poisoning and shall install one carbon monoxide detector on each floor that conforms to UL Standard 2034.
REPEAT VIOLATION
The center was supposed to get the annual inspection for furnace, HVAC appliance completed by November 1, 2025. The center hasn't gotten the equipment inspected.

109.12(1): Program structure that uses developmentally appropriate practices and written program of activities planned to the developmental needs of children served.Program complements but does not duplicate school curriculum.Schedule of program is posted in a place visible to parents.
Schedules weren't posted in all classrooms. The center has monthly themes but these weren't posted in classrooms.

109.12(2)a-d: The center shall not use as a form of discipline:Center does not use corporal punishment including spanking, shaking, or slapping.Punishment which is humiliating or frightening or causes pain or discomfort is not allowed. Children shall never be locked in a room or closet. When restraints are part of a treatment plan for a child with a disability authorized by a parent and a psychologist or psychiatrist, staff shall receive training on the safe and appropriate use of the restraint.Punishment or threat of punishment associated with illness, toilet training, or food or rest is not to be used.No child

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is subject to verbal abuse, threats, derogatory remarks about child or child's family.
A staff grabbed a two year old by one arm and pulled the child down from being on top of a stack of cots.

109.12(4)b: Each infant and toddler shall be diapered in a sanitary manner as frequently as needed at a central diapering area. Diapering, sanitation, and hand-washing procedures shall be posted and implemented in every diapering area. There shall be at least one changing table for every 15 infants.
There weren't diaper changing procedures in the infant classroom and also a bathroom that is used for diapering. There were no cleaning or sanitizing products in the bathroom. A child's hands were washed after being diapered.

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

A Corrective Action Plan was required after the visit completed on 4/28/26. The Corrective Action Plan has been sent back to the owner/director as it isn't sufficient to be approved. The Corrective Action Plan will be uploaded in the center's file once it is approved.

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

The center has a provisional license at this time due to the significant amount of licensing violations, some of those violations were violations that were addressed at the last annual visit.

Targeted Assessment: Behavior Management
Luann and Samika said their staff are taught that hands on discipline is not acceptable except for situations that children are hurting themselves or hurting others. Staff are taught to pick children up by handle children underneath their arms only. Staff are taught to talk to children at their level and to redirect children. Time outs are an option but more as a last option.

There was a small circular area made in the infant classroom with gates. Staff said children are placed in this area to play with toys. This worker requested this be removed as this type of structure restricts movement and can be used as a way of supervising children. This is a violation of square footage required for infants. This worker asked staff to remove the gating and Samika said the gates would be removed today.

Date: 06/04/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Melinda Larson, Child Care Licensing Consultant

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**.