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

Name of Center: The Whistle Stop Academy **Enrollment:** 149 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 16831

Street: 103 Campus Dr **City:** Huxley Iowa **Zip** 50124 **County:** Story

Mailing Address: PO Box 84, Huxley, IA, 50124

Director's Name: Keri Alleman/Amy Vandenburg **Phone Number:** 515-597-3637

On-Site Supervisor(s): Janelle Fitzwater **E-Mail:** whistlestop@huxcomm.net

Date(s) of Visit: 07-24-2023

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

LICENSING VISITS

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

Signed Application (470-0722) Received X **Yes** **No** **NA** **Date Signed:** 06-02-2021

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

Date Inspected: 02-13-2023

Comments : Fire 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 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	26	18	40	42	126
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 08-01-2023 to 08-01-2025
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Maggie Gibson, SW4 **Date:** 08-28-2023

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

N/A.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

An unannounced, full licensing visit was conducted 7/24/23. Keri Alleman and Amy Vandenburg were present for the majority of the visit.

The Whistle Stop Academy first opened in 1995. In 2000, they moved into the current building that was built specifically for child care. Keri Alleman is the owner and the co-director with Amy. Keri has a Bachelor's Degree and first started working in child care in 1987. She has owned The Whistle Stop Academy since 1995. The co-director is Amy Vandenburg. She has a degree in Elementary Education with an Early Childhood and Reading Endorsement. She started working part time at the center in 2006, and became full time in 2010. Janelle Fitzwater is the on-site supervisor. All meet qualifications for their roles.

The Whistle Stop Academy provides traditional daycare for newborn up to 12 years of age; which includes before and after school care, and preschool (including universal preschool partnered with the local school) for approximately 149 (which is the total enrollment, some are part time). The Center is the sole occupant of the building; which was built for to provide daycare services.

The center uses Creative Curriculum and uses a smart care application to communicate with parents.

All areas of the program were observed. These areas observed consisted of classroom observations and activities, nutritional practices, health and safety practices, playground observation, field trip and transportation practices, and administrative review.

Room Observation:
Young infants--ages 6 weeks to 6 or 8 months
This room was observed be in ratio with some infants napping and others eating or up interacting with staff. The room was tidy and observed to have an efficient use of space. It appears crib sheets were tight and that safe sleep practices were in use. Staff were working on feeding two infants and interacting with others that had just finished a bottle. The refrigerator in this room was clean and had the necessary temperature monitor. The center uses Oxivir to Sanitize. Staff were observed to be working cooperatively and responsive to the children in the room.

Older infants--up to age 14 months
There are 7 children in the room with 2 staff on this day, which is within ratio. Crib/Cot sheets are laundered by parents x1 weekly. This room was also in the middle of getting a bottle/lunch, diaper changes and napping. The room had efficient use of the space with a variety of centers/toys that were age/developmentally appropriate. The children were observed to be content with staff, and staff to be responsive to the children in this room.

Toddlers--(18-24 mo)
This room is in ratio. The room was in transition after eating to the next activity. Staff were observed to be responsive to the children; and the children freely coming to staff for assistance. The children seemed content with the structure in the

room. The room was nicely arranged with a choice of age/developmentally appropriate centers.

Early Preschool (2 and 3 y/o):
There are 14 children in attendance today, and enrollment is full at 17. The room was busy with their own centers. The room has a several age/developmentally appropriate activities and centers that are arranged nicely. Staff were engaged in reading a book to/with the children when observed.

Preschool (3 and 4 y/o):
This room is home to the universal preschool during the school year and is providing care during the summer break. The room is in ratio and was nicely arranged, and decorated with a variety of age/developmentally appropriate activities/centers. When school is in session; the local school provides a pre-school teacher for this room. This room was in the middle of a choice time activity, with the children at different centers in the room. The children appeared content and responsive to the positive structure of the room set by staff/program. This room had a "Christmas in July theme".

School age:
This room is has children from kindergarten to 11 years old. There are four main staff and the class is divided in groups when they have a field trip or off-campus activity. The center staff take attendance prior to leaving the room for the center-owned bus, again everyone is counted on the bus, when exiting the bus, when boarding the bus and again back at the center. The children were transitioning from a field trip on this day and getting ready to go outside to play. Staff were responsive to the children and the children appeared to response positively to the structure in this room. This room was tidy and contained a variety of age/developmentally appropriate activities/centers.

Nutrition:
This center has an on-site kitchen and dedicated cook with menus that reflect adherence to CACFP guidelines. The children do come to the kitchen/cafeteria area to have meals; that are served by staff/center cook. The kitchen had posted menus and the center is on a 4 week rotation for menu items. There were hand washing posters present. The storage was clean and orderly, as was the refrigeration. No expired or spoiled food items were observed.

Health and Safety:
The center has stocked first aid supplies. Emergency Plans were conspicuously posted and drills were documented to have been completed. Radon was completed in June 2022 in all of the rooms and the kitchen and fell below the the recommended max. The HVAC system is inspected in the fall and spring, and there was a new HVAC system installed in the fall of 2022. There are carbon dioxide detectors in use with battery back-ups. Restrooms located through out the building were clean and had the necessary sanitary items.

The center was observed to be tidy, with a collectively efficient use of space. The center's rooms were consistently nicely arranged, clean and had a variety of age/developmentally appropriate centers/activities/toys. The center's building appeared to be in good repair/condition.

Playground:
This center offers four playgrounds, divided by ages for use. All four playground areas had artificial rubber turf that was in good condition. There was ample shade and space available along with a plethora of outdoor activities available. Center staff noted that the center has purchased new shades over this past year.

Transportation/field trips:
The center has several smaller buses used for transportation; and some staff have obtained a chauffer's license also. The center does contract with a mechanic to maintain the vehicles. The day of the visit the children were in between coming back from a pool visit and another activity.

Administrative Records:
This center had conspicuously posted mandatory reporter information, provides ready access to handbooks, consultant contact, license, emergency exit plans and non-smoking signs.

Ten Child Files were reviewed during this visit; One was in need of an annual update. Most of the child files were orderly with up-to-date information.

Nine Employee files were reviewed; one file was found to contain national checks being submitted but did not contain results; two employee files were needing updated mandatory reporter training.

This center has a long-standing policy and handbook, that is readily accessible to parents and employees.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The center maintains high enrollment and there are many long-term staff at this center, including staff who have worked at the center for 20 years, 3 staff at 15 years and staff at 4 years. The staff in each room were observed to work as a "team" environment to assure the children in their care get their needs met.

This center is able to provide care for urgent needs such as for families offering family foster care or other emergent, unforeseen circumstances.

The staff work well together as a team and have strong communication.

Their cook has been with them since 2002, and she is very much a part of the staff and the kitchen is her classroom.

The center has a strong reputation in the community.

This center makes good use of their room; consistently offering a variety of centers/activities to the children in each room. The rooms were tidy and staff were observed to be actively involved in activities with the children/responsive to the children. The children appeared content and there was good structure provided in the rooms.

The center has a Facebook page.

The center has installed new shade structures for outdoor play areas; and has a plans for updating other features at the center as budget allows.

The center has been participating in the WAGES program for their staff. The center also participates in the TEACH program and there is currently two staff in the TEACH program working toward a Bachelor's degree. Additionally, the center had utilized AARA grants to help compensate staff.

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

109.9(1)e: All files contain documentation to indicate that ongoing staff training requirements are met, including current certifications in first aid/CPR and mandatory child abuse training.
Number not in compliance: 2

Mandatory reporter training is required to be completed every 3 years.

109.9(2): All files are updated at least annually and when a change occurs.

Files need reviewed/updated at least annually or when a change has occurred. One file needed reviewed/updated by the family.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Radon testing is required every two years. The center last completed radon testing in June of 2022. All rooms fell below the 4.0 cutoff.

The furnace is inspected annually; there was a new unit installed in fall of 2022.

This center had consistently tidy rooms with all staff engaged in responding to the needs of the children in each room. The center offers a good choice of indoor activities for each age and ample outdoor play space as well.

*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.