Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Community United Child Care Centers-Valley Park

Provider No.: 16036

Address: 1026 E Seerley BLVD, Cedar Falls, IA, 50613

County: Black Hawk

Director's Name: Jay Mattson

On-Site Supervisor: Sara Koester

Phone Number: 3192777303

E-Mail: admined@cuccc.org

HHS Visit Date: 07/15/2026

Licensing Period: 08/01/2025 to 08/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 01/16/2026

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

Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday	6:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Tuesday	6:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Wednesday	6:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Thursday	6:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Friday	6:00 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	90	58	132	106	386
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

On 07/15/26 I made an unannounced off year licensing visit to Community United Child Care Center-Valley Park in Cedar Falls. I met with Sara Koester, the on-site supervisor for the program. Ms. Koester was previously a teacher and assistant director at Community United Child Care Center at Valley Park. She started with CUCCC in August 2015. She has been an on-site supervisor since November 2023. Ms. Koester completed three years of an elementary education degree. Nicole Crawford and Lacy Vaughn (Reynolds) are the assistant program directors. Jay Mattson is the executive director of Community United Child Care Centers. Holly Dittmer is the Education Director. The non-profit corporation operates three childcare centers in the Waterloo-Cedar Falls area. CUCCC was formed on 07/01/93 and all the sites are handicap accessible. There are 44 staff members employed by the center.

The program is in a free-standing building. There are computers in the entrance for families to check their children in and out of the program. The program operates Monday through Friday from 6:00 am until 6:00 pm. It serves infants through school-aged children. There are currently 242 children enrolled. CUCCC-Valley Park is NAEYC accredited, and it expires on 12/01/28.

The center operates out of fifteen rooms. They have two infant rooms (Disney 1 and Disney 2), two toddler rooms (Circus and Dinosaur), two two-year-old rooms (Dalmatian and Farm), two three-year-old rooms (Ocean and Rainbow), three four and five-year-old rooms (Bear, Panda, and Koala), and four school-aged rooms (Rain Forest, Jungle, Rocket, and Space). An inspection of each room was completed. All rooms were within ratio during my visit.

Windows provide natural lighting. The rooms are decorated with the children's art projects, and posters to assist the children with the learning process, such as the alphabet, shapes, colors and numbers. Many of the rooms are decorated with

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

pictures of the children. 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, technology, puppets, geography, art, dramatic play, listening, writing, math, science/discovery, woodworking, sensory table, play dough, social studies, 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 are easily accessible to the children.

The center uses the Creative Curriculum to develop lesson plans. The center has a monthly health lesson. Activities are planned around themes. Each teacher creates their own lesson plans and turns them into the office. The rooms provide monthly newsletters to parents to inform parents of activities and important events. Each room has a parent board that provides information, such as a daily schedule, lesson plan and a welcome letter from the teacher. There are also staff boards in the room to remind staff of certain duties and their work schedules. There were no lesson plans available in the Jungle, Rocket, and Space rooms. During the summer months the school age rooms must have written lesson plans. This was noted in last year's report also.

There was a phone with emergency numbers and the center's address and phone number in each of the classrooms and in the kitchen. 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.

The program participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The center provides the children with breakfast, lunch and a morning and afternoon snack. Shayla Parsons is the cook. The program uses a four-week rotation of menus. The menus are adjusted for the seasons. Menus and allergies are posted. The children are served their food.

The program provides one brand of formula, cereal and baby food for the infants. If the parents want a different brand, they must provide it. Bottles are prepared and washed in the classroom using the three-step method. The children's feeding schedules were posted.

The kitchen was observed to be clean and organized. The center uses an industrial dishwasher to wash dishes. They also have sinks available. The program has an industrial refrigerator, an industrial freezer, three refrigerators and two chest freezers. There were thermometers present. There are also a refrigerator and a small freezer in each infant room and thermometers were present. Food items were stored according to NHSPS guidelines in the kitchen and pantry.

The center uses bleach and water to sanitize the food tables and disinfect the changing tables. I observed the teacher clean and sanitize the tables for snack and lunch and proper procedures are followed.

I observed or discussed diaper changes in each of the rooms and proper procedures were followed.

There are multiple sinks and changing tables in the center. Handwashing and diaper changing procedures were posted in most of the necessary areas. Please post handwashing procedures near the sink in the girl's bathroom near the gym.

I observed children from the Rainforest and Jungle room being sent to the bathrooms down the hall alone and unsupervised. This cannot occur. Children must be supervised walking to and from the bathrooms. This was noted in last year's report also.

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. I reviewed documentation of monthly playground inspections. The radon test was completed in March 2025 and is good for five years. Results were within EPA guidelines. Fuel burning inspections and a carbon monoxide detector are not necessary because the facility is entirely electric. Outlets were protected. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 01/16/26.

The parent information is located on a bulletin board inside each classroom and in 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 outdoor play area is divided into four separate fenced-in areas. Three areas have rubber tiles for surface cushioning and have grassy areas. The school age area has artificial turf for surface cushioning.

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

The area for infants and toddlers has a tree playhouse, a tunnel, water tables, a small piece of climbing equipment with a slide and a stationary piece of climbing equipment. There is a tarp for shade. There is also an overhang on the building that provides shade.

The area for two-year-old children had climbing equipment with a slide, a tunnel and other activities. There are water tables, a stationary climbing toy and a small table with chairs for the children to rest. There is a tarp for shade. There is also an overhang on the building that provides shade.

The area for children ages three through five-years-old has a larger piece of climbing equipment with multiple slides, a climbing rope and rings. There is a tarp for shade. There is also an overhang on the building that provides shade.

The area for school-aged children has a large piece of climbing equipment with slides, climbing walls, monkey bars, rings, steppingstones, ladders and balance beams. Shade is provided by small coverings on top of the climbing equipment.

Outside of the fenced play areas there is a larger fenced area with a concrete area and a basketball hoop. There is also a very large grassy area. Trees provide shade in this area. Part of this area is naturalistic with activity centers and gardens. On the west side of the fenced-in area there is a large grassy area with soccer nets. Trees provide shade.

The center also has use of a gym. There is approved fall surfacing in the gym. There are balls, hula hoops and other games available. There are basketball hoops, a loft to play on and balance beams with stepping posts.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

I said this last year also, but it remains true, there are several lead teachers that have longevity with the childcare program and they have a strong administrative team. Staff members are good at communicating with one another in the classrooms and I observed great teamwork. Staff members have good routines in the classrooms for the children. Staff members were enthusiastic. I observed them doing fun activities with the children. When I observed staff members reading books to the children, they were expressive and made the story fun. They used the story to talk about colors and count and they asked the children questions to include them in the story. When staff members spoke to the children, they got down on the child's level and talked with them in a calm tone. Staff members gave the children clear and easy to understand directions. They were patient and provided the children with praise. They used positive redirection when necessary. Staff members had the children outside to enjoy the weather before it was too hot. Some of the classrooms had a water day. I enjoyed watching the interaction.

Ms. Koester states they have a good group of college students helping this summer.

Ms. Koester states staff morale is good and they always step up when they are needed.

Ms. Koester states they put new floors in one of the rooms. They are going to make additional improvements over time.

Ms. Koester states they have good longevity with their lead staff members.

The program has a terrific and active summer program for school age children. The preschool children take field trips in the fall and spring.

There are cameras in each of the rooms and they are in a secure building. The cameras can record.

The center has vans to provide transportation for field trips and to school. The enrolled children attend Hansen Elementary, Lincoln Elementary, Orchard Hill Elementary, and Cedar Heights Elementary. The program has five vans.

There are pictures of the staff members in the entrance.

CUCCC-Valley Park is NAEYC accredited and it expires on 12/01/28.

CUCCC had a birthday on July 1st and they have been in operation for 33 years.

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Each classroom has a water day and a movie day.

The classrooms do a monthly health lesson.

The CUCCC franchise has won the Courier Best of the Best contest for best childcare for multiple years.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

109.10(14)a: The center and supervisor shall ensure that staff knows names and number of children assigned. Staff shall provide careful supervision.
I observed children from the Rainforest and Jungle room being sent to the bathrooms down the hall alone and unsupervised. This cannot occur. Children must be supervised walking to and from the bathrooms. This was noted in last year's report also.

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.
There were no lesson plans available in the Jungle, Rocket, and Space rooms. During the summer months the school age rooms must have written lesson plans. This was noted in last year's report also.

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

N/A

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

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

Targeted Assessment: Behavior Management:
I discussed with Ms. Koester her oversight of behavior management related to helping childcare staff: 1) Understand expectations, 2) managing frustrations, 3) monitor performance. Ms. Koester states she goes over their expectations at orientation for new staff members and they have reminders during staff meetings for all staff members. Ms. Koester states if someone is having problems they will bring a child to the office. She states they will get Holly Dittmer, the Education Director, involved and she will visit classrooms and do observations and watch the dynamic. Then she will meet with the teachers to discuss strategies. The center will use AEA as a last resort.

Ms. Koester states to monitor she will check in with staff members and offer help. There are cameras in the classrooms she can review. She states staff members are good at coming to the administrative team whether they have concerns for the behaviors of a child or the actions of a co-worker.

Date: 07/27/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Becky Frost

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

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**.