



CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Growing Bear Day Care & Preschool Inc

Provider No.: 18344

Address: 526 4th St NW, Waukon, IA, 52172

County: Allamakee

Director's Name: Jessica Waters

On-Site Supervisor: Sarita Becker

Phone Number: 5635682939

E-Mail: growingbeardaycare@yahoo.com

HHS Visit Date: 02/09/2026

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

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 02/22/2024

Comments: Compliance on 03/11/24

Report Visit Type:

- ☐ PTO
- ☒ Licensing Visit
- ☐ Drop In
- ☐ Administrative Change

License Type:

- ☒ Full
- ☐ Provisional

Quality initiative:

Quality Rating: 4

- ☐ Accrediation

Program Duration:

- ☒ Year-Round
- ☐ School Year
- ☐ Summer Only



CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

HOURS:	<u>Year-round</u>	<u>School-Year</u>	<u>Summer Only</u>
Sunday			
Monday	5:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Tuesday	5:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Wednesday	5:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Thursday	5:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Friday	5:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

- ☒ Infant(0-<24 Months)
☒ Toddler
☒ PreSchool
☒ School Age
☐ All Ages

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	12	20	19	30	81
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

On 02/09/26 I made an unannounced off year licensing visit to Growing Bear Day Care & Preschool, Inc. in Waukon. I met with Jessica “Jessie” Waters, the director and owner of the center. Ms. Waters has owned and operated the center since 1997. She has an AA in childcare and child development, and she has her National Administrator Credential (NAC). She is also a member of NAEYC. Sarita Becker is the on-site supervisor, and she is in charge when Ms. Waters is not present. She has been employed at the center since January 2006 and the on-site supervisor since August 2020. Ms. Becker has an AA in early childhood education and an AA in human services. There are fourteen staff members employed by the center.

The program is in a free-standing building. The center operates Monday through Friday from 5:00 am until 6:00 pm and operates year-round. The program serves infants through school age children. The center partners with the Allamakee Community School District for the Iowa voluntary four-year-old preschool program. Dawanda Ryder is the teacher of the voluntary preschool class. She has an AA in education and a BA in elementary education with an early childhood endorsement. The voluntary preschool hours are Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 8:45 am until 12:15 pm. There are currently 93 children enrolled.

The center operates out of the following rooms: infants (six weeks to 14-15 months), a room for children aged 14-15 months until they turn two years old. A room for two-year-olds, a room for three-year-olds, and a shared room for the four-year-old preschool class and school age children. An inspection of each room was completed. Windows provide natural lighting. The rooms are decorated with 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. There is an area for circle time in the rooms.



CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

The centers observed on the day of the licensing visit include library, Lego/blocks, table toys, games, puzzles, transportation, Ipads, art, dramatic play, play dough, writing, math, science/discovery, 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 voluntary preschool class uses the Creative Curriculum. She also uses Handwriting Without Tears, Jolly Phonics, Heggerty Phonemic Awareness, and Tera West math and literacy curriculum used by the school. Ms. Ryder completes the GOLD assessments on students. Ms. Ryder makes one home visit to the children's home each year. The other rooms use a variety of resources to develop their lesson plans. The length of the theme depends on the children's interest level and topic. Lesson plans were available for review in each room. Daily schedules were posted in all rooms.

Daily sheets are completed for all children under the age of two years old.

Emergency numbers with the program's address and phone number were posted near each phone in the program. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and emergency evacuation diagrams were posted by all the main program doors and outdoor exits throughout the center.

Cribs and cots are used to nap in the infant room and cots are used to nap for the older children.

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. I reviewed documentation of monthly playground inspections.

A radon test was completed in March 2023 and is good for two years. Results were within EPA guidelines. The program installed a radon mitigation system in late 2014. Ms. Waters was under the impression she no longer had to do radon testing because she has a radon mitigation system. Radon testing must occur every two years. Ms. Waters has ordered radon kits and will complete testing in all rooms.

The fuel burning inspection was completed and no concerns were noted. A carbon monoxide detector was on site and is located on each level of the center. It is in the bathroom in the three-year-old room on the main level and in a closet by the furnace on the lower level. Outlets were protected. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 02/22/24, with compliance on 03/11/24.

The center participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Ms. Waters is the cook for the program, and she has completed the CACFP and Serv Safe training. The program provides breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack. The menus are on a four-week rotation and there is a separate series of menus prepared for May through November and November through May.

Parents provide formula, baby food and cereal. Bottles are washed and sanitized in the infant room.

The kitchen is on the lower level. It was observed to be clean and organized. Menus and allergies were posted. There is a refrigerator and two chest freezers and thermometers were present. There is one double bowl sink and handwashing procedures were posted. The center uses a dishwasher to clean and sanitize dishes. There is a refrigerator in each of the rooms and thermometers were present. Food is stored off the ground and food items are stored according to NHSPS guidelines in the kitchen. In the two year old room there were cereal and crackers that were not stored according to NHSPS guidelines. Once a food item is opened it must be stored in a sealed container. There was not a pattern of disregard so this will not be cited.

The program uses Purell Food Service Surface Sanitizer to sanitize food tables and Purell Professional Surface Disinfectant disinfect changing tables. I observed or discussed diaper changes in the classrooms. In the infant room and the room for children aged 14-15 months through two years old the staff members are leaving their gloves on. Gloves are considered soiled and must be removed prior to the new diaper and dressing the child.

Handwashing procedures and diaper changing procedures were posted in all locations. In the room for children aged 14-15 months through two years old you must move the diaper changing procedures so they are near the changing table.

I observed medication authorization forms for prescription medications. Parents must fill out the form completely and



CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

include a start and end date for the medication.

There is a fenced in play area for the children. There is an area for older children and one for younger children. The outdoor area is in a natural setting and there is no climbing equipment. There is a playhouse located on wood chips. There are “boom whackers” on the fence so the children can play music and there is an easel outside so the children can enjoy art. There are blocks, a balance beam and a sensory table. There are picnic tables for the children. There is a cement area for children to ride bikes and the center has helmets for the children. There is a sandbox with a shade structure. Trees are also in the area to provide shade.

The area for the younger children is located under a deck area. There is also a kitchen set and some riding toys and pushing toys.

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. Parent resources are also located in this area.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

Staff members were actively engaged with the children in every room. I observed staff members on the floor playing with the children. They used play to talk with the children about colors and numbers. Staff members were engaged in positive conversation and allowed children to share stories and use their imaginations. Staff members reminded the children to wash their hands. Staff members provided the children with praise and they were enthusiastic. Each room had water bottles available for when the children became thirsty. Staff members talked with the children about using their manners and about using their words to express what they want. Staff members used positive redirection when necessary. They had good knowledge of the children in their care and their routines. The children were having fun in the classrooms while I was present.

Ms. Waters states they have staff longevity, which allows them to have consistency with the children and groups in classrooms.

Ms. Waters states they have two staff members using the TEACH program and five staff members using the WAGES program.

Ms. Waters states they provide excellent care for the children.

Ms. Waters has owned and operated this center since 1997. She is dedicated to providing a safe environment for children and she provides every opportunity for staff members for additional training, additional educational and if they qualify, they can participate in the WAGES program for additional income. She is a great leader.

The program is in a secure building and there are cameras in each room and outside of the center.

There are pictures of the staff members in the entrance.

The program is a bus stop for the children.

The program has an IQ4K level of 4 that expires on 03/31/27.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

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.

I observed or discussed diaper changes in the classrooms. In the infant room and the room for children aged 14-15 months through two years old the staff members are leaving their gloves on. Gloves are considered soiled and must be removed



Health and
Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

prior to the new diaper and dressing the child.

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 DHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period.

Please talk with staff members on the proper way to complete diaper changes. Gloves are considered soiled and must be removed prior to putting on the new diaper and dressing the child.

Please make sure staff members complete the medication authorization forms completely. They must provide a start date, end date and dosage.

Ms. Waters did not think she had to do a radon testing because she has a radon mitigation system. She states she has never had a problem with radon results but was told that having a radon mitigation system would mean she would no longer have to do radon testing. She has ordered radon kits and will test each of the classrooms.

Date: 02/10/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Becky Frost

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>.