Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE ANNUAL EVALUATION

Business Name: Hugging Tree Nature Preschool, Inc

Provider Name: Hugging Tree Nature Preschool, Inc

Provider No.: 51433

Address: 1617 Rainbow DR, Waterloo, IA, 50701

E-Mail:

County: Black Hawk

Phone Number: 3195298688

- [ ] Pre-Inspection Date:
- [ ] Approval Date:
- [X] Annual Visit Date: 10/5/2026

Program Type:

- [ ] Registered Child Development Home A (guidelines for ratios on all categories)
- [ ] Registered Child Development Home B
- [ ] Registered Child Development Home C
- [X] Registered Child Development Home C1
- [ ] Non Registered Child Care Homes accepting CCA

Program Population Served:

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

1. Basic Overview

Melissa has been a Registered childcare provider with the state since June of 2021. She does not participate in the IQ4K quality rating system. She does participate in the Food Program. Melissa was previously the Director of a childcare center for 10 years and worked in another childcare for a few years as well. She also has experience as a Pre-school teacher and as a reading interventionist in the school system. Melissa's program serves children between the ages of 3-5. Melissa's program is name Hugging Tree Nature Preschool. She primarily utilizes her outdoor space most of the year that includes naps and meals outside. In the winter months and during light rain the children still play outside, as well as nap and eat outside. They do utilize the garage for colder or rainy weather, and the children are required to bring clothing appropriate for the outdoor weather. Melissa does have appropriate space for the children and appropriate activities for indoor play as well. In June and July, Melissa only provides care in the morning, and she is closed in August. She provides care from 9-3:30 September -

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May. Melissa does provide transportation to the children for regular outings that she refers to as "adventures". She does have appropriate car seats for the children. Melissa does have two dogs that do interact with the children. Melissa does not have a substitute or assistant.

2. Identify Observed Strengths Of The Program

Melissa had 6 children in care on this date. They were playing outside when this worker arrived participating in a variety of activities. Children shared some of their favorite activities to including the slide, running around outside and helping pick vegetables from the garden. The children also observed some birds in a bird house and were able to talk about why the birds are currently building a nest (in preparation for the winter).

This worker did observe Melissa to appropriately redirect and talk to a child who was upset.

Melissa's policies were nicely written and detailed. She had much more than the required minimum policies. Her other documentation was organized into folders and all in a file box. That allowed this worker to review her documentation while she was able to continue to supervise and interact with the children.

Melissa prides herself on running a preschool setting that offers a variety of activities for the children.

3. Identify The Aspects That Fall Below The Standard

Melissa was in full compliance with all mandated regulatory requirements of a Registered Child Development Home.

If you have questions, you may contact me at 319-429-0749 or via email at christy.weber@hhs.iowa.gov

Thank you for your service in providing childcare in your community.

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

NA

5. Special Notes/recommendations

Notes:
Melissa does transport the childcare children on weekly adventures.
Melissa shared that she does not ever use a swimming pool but does use other forms of water play.
We did discuss safe sleep policies although Melissa does not take infants in her program.
We did discuss the number of children she is allowed to care for at one time as a Category C1 provider.

As part of the 2026 Targeted compliance the Emergency Preparedness Plan was thoroughly reviewed. Melissa was in compliance with her EPP.
She was encouraged to review it at least yearly to ensure that no changes need to be made.

Recommendations:
As of 7/1/25 providers are expected to notify all parents in writing that the state does allow parents to submit an exemption for immunizations (either religious or medical) in lieu of the immunization record for each child. Melissa did have this documented last year but updated her policies/handbook recently and inadvertently left that out. She did agree to add that language back into her policies and she will need to ensure that her updated policies are provided to all the parents accordingly.

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HHS Child Development
Home Compliance Worker: Christine Weber Date: 10/5/2026

Non-compliance with any of the mandated regulatory requirements listed above may lead to the cancellation or revocation of your Child Development Home Registration. Please take whatever steps are necessary to completely address each of the violations noted above. It is essential you correct all above-mentioned violations.

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 I encourage you to work with Black Hawk County Child Care Resource and referral at 319-233-0804 if you have any ongoing compliance or training needs.