South Dakota Department of Social Services

Strong Families - South Dakota's Foundation and Our Future

Office of Licensing and Accreditation

LICENSING STUDY
for INTENSIVE RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT CENTERS

ARSD 67:42:01, 67:42:15

January 28, 2026

Aurora Plains Academy

1400 10th St, Plankinton, SD 57368, USA

1.	**Licensing Requirements 67:42:07:11.01; 67:42:15:02; SDCL 26-6-11**	**Requirement Met**
A.	The following have been submitted to the Department	
	1. Application materials for license.	Yes
	2. Documentation of need as per SDCL 26-6-11.	Yes
	3. A copy of the building plans (approved by the Fire Marshal and Department of Health).	N/A
	4. Documentation to verify the agency/facility is currently accredited by COA, CARF or JC or making progress in pursuit of accreditation.	Yes
B.	A statement of compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is included in the agency's policies or is a part of the purchase of service contract with the Department.	Yes
	COMMENTS:	
	An application was submitted on December 2, 2025. Documentation to show Aurora Plains Academy (APA) is accredited by the Council on Accreditation through July 31, 2028 was submitted with the application.	

2.	**Agency Responsibilities SDCL 26-6-11**	**Requirement Met**
A.	The building and equipment needs of the organization are adequately met.	Yes
B.	The agency has sufficient funds to meet the needs of the community.	Yes
	COMMENTS:	
	The facility is adequately furnished and maintained to accommodate residents.	

3.	**Insurance 67:42:01:35**	**Requirement Met**
A.	Vehicles used to transport clients have appropriate passenger liability insurance.	Yes
B.	The agency carries public liability insurance.	Yes
	COMMENTS:	
	A copy of the certificate of insurance showing coverage through June 1, 2026 was submitted with the application.	

4.	**Accounting Systems 67:42:01:34**	**Requirement Met**

4.	**Accounting Systems 67:42:01:34**	**Requirement Met**
A.	An audit of the accounts has been done in the last year by a CPA. COMMENTS: A copy of an audit completed June 4, 2025 was submitted with the application.	Yes

5.	**Staff Qualifications 67:42:15:04; 67:42:15:05; 67:42:15:06; 67:42:15:07; 67:42:15:08**	**Requirement Met**
A	Program Director	
	1. Masters Degree in an accredited behavioral or social science area plus four years relevant alternative childcare experience; or	Yes
	2. Bachelors Degree in an accredited behavioral or social science area plus six year's relevant alternative child care experience.	Yes
B.	Counselor/Therapist	
	1. Masters Degree in social work, counseling, psychology or other behavioral science; or	Yes
	2. Bachelor's Degree in accredited social or behavioral science plus three years working with difficult adolescents.	Yes
	3. Hold's license in applicable field if available.	Yes
	4. Caseload of no more than 12 children, or 6 if doing both therapy and case management.	Yes
C.	Case Manager	
	1. Bachelor's Degree in accredited behavioral or social science area; or	Yes
	2. Equivalent combination of education and experience.	Yes
	3. Caseload of no more than 12 children, or 6 if doing both therapy and case management.	Yes
D.	Direct Care Staff	
	1. At least one of three staff per unit has a Bachelor's Degree in behavioral or social science area; or	Yes
	2. Forty-eight credit hours of post-high school education and one year child group care experience that includes behavior management and intervention, recreational and therapeutic activities, and participation in assessment and case planning.	Yes
	3. Staff that do not meet the requirements of 1 or 2 are under the supervision of a staff member who provides direct care to children and meets the requirements of 1 or 2.	Yes

5.	**Staff Qualifications 67:42:15:04; 67:42:15:05; 67:42:15:06; 67:42:15:07; 67:42:15:08**	**Requirement Met**
	4. If under age twenty-one, is under direct supervision of an experienced child care staff; and 3 years older than any children supervised.	N/A
	COMMENTS: A list of staff and their qualifications was submitted with the application. Johnathan Trunkey is the Program Manager and has a Master's Degree in Counseling.	

6.	**Staff/Child Ratio 67:42:15:14**	**Requirement Met**
A.	1:3 during waking hours.	Yes
B.	1:6 during sleeping hours in each living unit.	Yes
C.	Arrangements made for substitute staff during vacations, illness, or off-duty time of regular staff.	Yes
D.	Certified special education teachers are employed as appropriate.	Yes
E.	Provisions are made for auxiliary staff members, i.e., mental health professionals, physical therapist, and/or occupational therapist as needed to fulfill the facility's defined purposes.	Yes
F.	A minimum of two adults are on the grounds at all times when children are present.	Yes
G.	The facility has a written plan to ensure that staff, law enforcement, or appropriate emergency responders are available at the center within a reasonable time in the event of an emergency.	Yes
	COMMENTS: The schedule provided with the application, if followed, shows sufficient staff to maintain staff to child ratios. Staff and youth interviewed shared that staff to child ratios are followed at all times.	

7.	**Personnel Records 67:42:07:07, 67:42:07:08, 67:42:07:09**	**Requirement Met**
A.	Personnel records are maintained and contain the following:	
	1. Resume or application that includes educational background, personal, and employment history.	Yes
	2. Job description.	Yes
	3. Annual Performance Appraisal.	Yes
	4. Verification of contact with at least three former employers or professional references if former employers not available	Yes

7.	**Personnel Records** 67:42:07:07, 67:42:07:08, 67:42:07:09	Requirement Met
	5. Verification of screening for substantiated reports of child abuse or neglect.	N/A
	6. Verification of submission of fingerprints to the DCI/FBI within fourteen days of employment.	N/A
	7. Verification of sex offender registry checks.	N/A
	8. Verification of current certification in basic 1st aid and CPR.	Yes
	9. At least one official onsite designated to authorize the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard.	Yes
	COMMENTS: Records reviewed contained documentation to support the items above.	

8.	**In-service Training** 67:42:15:15; 67:42:15:16	Requirement Met
A.	There is a written plan for orientation and training for staff and volunteers.	Yes
B.	Each employee has a documented record of an initial orientation to the center within one month of the date of hire that includes the facility's functions, services, community resources and specific job functions.	Yes
C.	Each employee has a documented record of a minimum of fifty hours annual in-service training.	Yes
D.	Each employee receives in-service training during the first year of employment that includes all of the areas required in 67:42:15:16.	Yes
E.	Training for all employees after the first year of employment is determined by an annual evaluation, is competency based and includes five hours in a nationally recognized program of behavior management techniques and five hours of training in specials areas used to provide services.	Yes
	COMMENTS: Records reviewed contained documentation to support the items above.	

9.	**Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect, Changes in Circumstances and unusual incidents** 67:42:01:12; 67:42:07:15; 67:42:07:16: 67:42:07:29	Requirement Met

9.	**Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect, Changes in Circumstances and unusual incidents 67:42:01:12; 67:42:07:15; 67:42:07:16: 67:42:07:29**	**Requirement Met**
A.	The facility has a written procedures for handling and reporting suspected in-house CA/N. It includes:	
	1. A definition of what constitutes CA/N;	Yes
	2. Immediate reporting to DSS or law enforcement;	Yes
	3. A procedure for assuring the incident will not recur pending the investigation;	Yes
	4. A procedure for evaluating the continued employability of any staff member involved in an incident of CA/N.	Yes
B.	Each employee has signed a statement acknowledging and understanding the reporting procedure.	Yes
C.	The facility is aware of its need to report any changes of circumstances that may affect its licensed status or unusual incidents.	Yes
	COMMENTS: Records reviewed contained documentation to support the items above.	

10.	**Treatment 67:42:01:01(7); 67:42:01:21; 67:42:07:10; 67:42:15:01; 67:42:15:03; 67:42:15:09; 67:42:15:10; 67:42:15:11; 67:42:15:12; 67:42:15:18; 67:42:15:19; 67:42:15:20**	**Requirement Met**
A.	There are written procedures relating to:	
	1. Intake.	Yes
	2. Treatment.	Yes
	3. Discharge.	Yes
	4. Confidentiality.	Yes
	5. Behavior management and passive physical restraint.	Yes
	6. On-going and emergency health care of children.	Yes
	7. Emergency procedures in case a child is injured.	Yes
	8. Discipline.	Yes
	9. Family Services.	Yes
	10. Aftercare services	Yes
	11. The child's parent or guardian has signed and dated a statement that lists the specific policies covered as verification that the facility provided the required information.	Yes
	12. Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard	Yes
B.	Children attend an on-grounds school	Yes
C.	Required services are provided by the facility as follows:	
	1. Psychological services;	Yes

10.	**Treatment 67:42:01:01(7); 67:42:01:21; 67:42:07:10; 67:42:15:01; 67:42:15:03; 67:42:15:09; 67:42:15:10; 67:42:15:11; 67:42:15:12; 67:42:15:18; 67:42:15:19; 67:42:15:20**	**Requirement Met**
	2. Case services treatment planning;	Yes
	3. Case management;	Yes
	4. Psychiatric services;	Yes
	5. Family services;	Yes
	6. Transitional services; and	Yes
	7. Aftercare services.	Yes
D.	The facility employs a full-time licensed nurse with 24-hour access to medical care provided by a nurse or hospital emergency room.	Yes
E.	Case records are maintained and include the following:	
	1. Face sheet/application form with identifying information.	Yes
	2. Documentation to verify the child meets IRTC and PRTF eligibility.	Yes
	3. Treatment plan developed and signed by the treatment team that includes the child, parent or guardian, IRTC Case Manager, counselor or therapist, IRTC teacher, psychiatrist, psychologist and placing agency staff.	Yes
	4. Treatment plans are established within fourteen days of placement.	Yes
	5. Treatment plans are based on assessment of the child's medical, psychological, social, behavioral and developmental needs, strengths, weaknesses and problems and reflect the need for IRTC.	Yes
	6. Treatment plans contain treatment goals and objectives for the child and their family with an integrated program of therapies, activities and experiences designed to meet the goals.	Yes
	7. Treatment plans include conditions for discharge, and a discharge plan that includes:	
	a. Projected date of discharge;	Yes
	b. Responsibilities of provider, child, family and placing agency;	Yes
	c. Transitional services to be provided and by whom;	Yes
	d. Crisis and emergency plans;	Yes
	e. Links with resources and preparation to navigate adult system if 16 or older;	Yes
	f. Aftercare services;	Yes
	g. List of responsible persons; and	Yes
	h. Involvement of Tribe in aftercare planning if Native American.	Yes

10.	**Treatment 67:42:01:01(7); 67:42:01:21; 67:42:07:10; 67:42:15:01; 67:42:15:03; 67:42:15:09; 67:42:15:10; 67:42:15:11; 67:42:15:12; 67:42:15:18; 67:42:15:19; 67:42:15:20**	**Requirement Met**
	8. Treatment plan is reviewed at least every 30 days and a progress report sent to placement agency.	Yes
	9. Evidence of application of the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard.	Yes
	10. Physical exam (three months prior to or one month following admission).	Yes
	11. Current immunization record.	Yes
	12. A signed authorization for medical care at the time of placement.	Yes
	13. On-going records of medical/dental/eye/hearing care.	Yes
F.	Records are kept in a locked file.	Yes
G.	The interstate compact administrator has been contacted before acceptance of an out-of-state child.	Yes
	COMMENTS: Records reviewed contained documentation to support the items above. Initial Treatment plan timeframes showed improvement from the last review period which required a corrective action plan.	

11.	**Medications 67:42:07:19; 67:42:07:20; 67:42:07:22; 67:42:07:23; 67:42:15:19**	**Requirement Met**
A.	The facility has written procedures relating to the storage and administration of medication which include:	
	1. Responsibility of licensed nurse for administration with delegation only within requirements of ARSD 20:48:04.01.	Yes
	2. Documentation.	Yes
	3. Immediately notifying the facility's nurse in cases of medication errors or drug reactions. The nurse assesses the situation and determines whether there is a need to report the incident to the attending physician.	Yes
	4. Evaluating and recording children's reactions to medication.	Yes
B.	Psychotropic drugs are prescribed by a psychiatrist with monthly medication management services.	Yes
C.	Medicine is kept in a locked cabinet.	Yes
D.	A medication record is kept on each child.	Yes

11.	**Medications** 67:42:07:19; 67:42:07:20; 67:42:07:22; 67:42:07:23; 67:42:15:19	Requirement Met
	COMMENTS: Records reviewed contained documentation to support the items above.	

12.	**Seclusion and Restraint** 67:42:15:18, 67:42:07:24; 67:42:07:25; 67:42:07:26	Requirement Met
A.	The facility has a written procedure relating to the use of ESI that allows for use only to ensure safety of the child or others and by order of a physician or other licensed practitioner.	Yes
B.	Use of ESI is incorporated into the treatment plan.	Yes
C.	Placement agency/parent/guardian are informed of policies, give written approval for use of ESI at the time of admission and are notified of use of ESI as soon as possible.	Yes
D.	Only qualified staff give and receive orders and monitor and provide assessments following ESI.	Yes
E.	Trained clinical staff continually monitors children while involved in ESI.	Yes
F.	ESI's do not exceed times allowed in orders.	Yes
G.	Required reports are completed following ESI.	Yes
H.	Staff involved in an ESI meet with the child involved to discuss the ESI and with administrative staff within 24 hours after use of the ESI.	Yes
I.	Medical treatment is provided for a resident injured during an ESI	Yes
J.	Seclusion rooms meet the physical specifications of 67:42:07:25.	Yes
	COMMENTS: Records reviewed contained documentation to support the items above.	

13.	**Volunteers** 67:42:07:14	Requirement Met
A.	Have a written job description with specific responsibilities.	N/A
B.	Supervised and evaluated by an experienced staff member.	N/A
C.	Three documented references.	N/A
D.	Documented orientation.	N/A
E.	Documented in-service training as per 67:42:07:04 if volunteer works thirty plus hours per week.	Yes
F.	Informed of obligation to report suspected CA/N.	N/A

13. Volunteers 67:42:07:14		Requirement Met
G.	Verification of screening for substantiated reports of child abuse or neglect.	N/A
H.	Verification of submission of fingerprints to the DCI/FBI within fourteen days of employment.	N/A
I.	Verification of sex offender registry checks.	N/A

COMMENTS:
APA did not use volunteers in the last year.

14. Physical Facility 67:42:07:11, 67:42:07:12		Requirement Met
A.	There is a current fire inspection.	Yes
B.	There is a current health inspection.	Yes
C.	A fire escape plan is posted.	Yes
D.	A minimum of four fire drills held annually.	Yes
E.	Children of opposite gender over the age of six have separate sleeping facilities.	Yes
F.	Sleeping children are monitored.	Yes
G.	Each child has their own bed with linens, blankets and pillows.	Yes

COMMENTS:
A fire and health inspection was conducted on November 6, 2025 with no issues noted.

15. Nutrition 67:42:07:13		Requirement Met
A.	Meals are of sufficient quantity to meet children's nutritional needs.	Yes
B.	Arrangements are made for children with a special prescribed diet.	Yes

COMMENTS:
Staff and youth interviewed reported the meals to be of sufficient quality and quantity.

Recommendations

COMMENTS:

Signatures



1/13/2026, 1:28:05 PM

January 13, 2026

Kevin Kanta, Program Specialist | **Date**

December 18, 2025

Date of Site Visit



1/22/2026, 11:03:10 AM

January 22, 2026

Muriel Nelson, Program Manager | **Date**