Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: First Steps Academy

Provider No.: 52828

Address: 806 Main St, Boyden, IA, 51234

County: Sioux

Director's Name: Shelby Kooima

On-Site Supervisor:

Phone Number: 7126315877

E-Mail: shelbykooima@gmail.com

HHS Visit Date: 11/17/2025

Licensing Period: 06/01/2025 to 05/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 04/21/2025

Comments: This worker completed a visit on 11/17/25. This program has been measured to include an infant room. Fire marshal has inspected. Their capacity has changed to 26.

Report Visit Type:

- [ ] PTO
- [ ] Licensing Visit
- [ ] Drop In
- [X] Administrative Change

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

- [ ] Accrediation

Program Duration:

- [X] Year-Round
- [ ] School Year
- [ ] Summer Only

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Program Population Served:

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	8	8	10		26
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

I completed an unannounced visit at this new center on 06/10/25 where I was able to meet with Director Shelby Kooima. I have met Shelby previously as we have met to discuss the licensing process. She is currently in her final year of college and will earn a Bachelor of Arts Degree for early childhood education. She has connected with her Childcare Resources and Referral team for assistance. Shelby participated in the Lead Pilot classes and is a very organized director.

The center has a well written parent handbook and staff handbook. The handbook reflects the requirements of the HHS licensing manual and the code of ethics for the center correlates with the NAEYC which promotes high standards for childcare.

The center is located near the city library, and they take advantage of programs offered there. On the day of my visit the children were enjoying a juggler at the library. There has also been a travelling zoo and an upcoming dairy program and a summer full of other activities at the library. The center is also planning on utilizing the splash pad in Boyden for another community activity.

There are 16 children enrolled in the program. There were 11 children present at the time of my visit. All areas of the program were observed. These areas consisted of classroom observations and activities, nutritional practices, health and safety practices, playground observation, field trip and transportation practices, and administrative review.

They use a theme-based curriculum. This week's theme is "Under the Sea" where all of their lessons and activities focus on things found in the sea. For example, their sensory activities include digging in sand for seashells. They are learning about the eco system and for this week their focus in on science.

There are visual aids hanging such as colors, the alphabet, numbers and children's artwork. The rooms have good arrangements with different areas for learning. They have quiet area for reading books, dramatic play, age-appropriate toys which were all in good repair.

The center is also focused on growing your child's socio-emotional skills. They are assisting the children in their care to problem solve and have a good self-esteem.

I observed good interaction between staff and the children in their care. Staff are present to welcome children to the center and provide a positive environment.

Medication is stored in a lock box or out of reach of the children. There is no one currently on medication. First aid kit is sufficient to treat minor injuries. Fire/tornado drills are documented each month. Radon tests are complete. Annual heating

inspection is complete. Center has a functioning carbon monoxide detector. All program areas were observed to be clean and well maintained.

Bathrooms are clean and good handwashing was observed.

Although currently not on the CCFAP they do follow their nutritional guidelines. The kitchen is very clean and good sanitizing methods were observed. They utilize one room for their meals and staff sit with them eating family style.

The playground was observed. It is fenced in and has turf surface. There are markings on the turf that look like a football field making it more fun for the children.

They use the Bright Wheel app to communicate with parents. They have a clipboard with emergency contacts that they take with them when they are not in the center.

They do not have transportation.

The goal for this program is to work on their IQ4K's certification.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

This is the only licensed center in Boyden and is a good resource for the community it serves.

It is clean, well-organized and provides positive care to the children who attend.

The director is continuing her education to be a licensed teacher.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

109.11(7)b: Centers at ground level that use basement area as program space, or have a basement beneath program space: Testing and plan for remedy of radon is conducted.

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

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

Center is rechecking Radon in the fall of 2025. Please send consultant the results of this testing. If radon continues to be a high a plan for mitigation needs to be put into place.

A full license is recommended at this time.

At least one visit will be made to the center during the next year.

Date: 11/18/2025

HHS Licensing Consultant: Leann Steinhauer

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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**.