Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: First Kids Preschool and Child Care

Provider No.: 21423

Address: 718 Clay Street, Cedar Falls, IA, 50613

County: Black Hawk

Director's Name: Susan Heichel

On-Site Supervisor: Deana Herzmann

Phone Number: 3192669289

E-Mail: firstkids@aboutfirst.com

HHS Visit Date: 01/22/2026

Licensing Period: 02/01/2026 to 02/01/2028

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 09/24/2025

Comments:

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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HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday	7:30 AM to 4:30 PM		
Tuesday	7:30 AM to 4:30 PM		
Wednesday	7:30 AM to 4:30 PM		
Thursday	7:30 AM to 4:30 PM		
Friday	7:30 AM to 4:30 PM		
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	23	13	28	0	64
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

On 01/22/26 I made an unannounced licensing visit to First Kids Preschool and Child Care in Cedar Falls. I met with Susan Heichel, the director, and Deana Herzmann, the on-site supervisor. Ms. Heichel and Ms. Herzmann have been with the program since 2002. There are six staff members, not including Ms. Heichel and Ms. Herzmann.

The center is in First United Methodist Church. The program operates Monday through Friday from 7:30 am until 4:30 pm. It serves children ages six weeks through six-years-old (or before they start Kindergarten). The center offers a three-year-old and a four and five-year-old preschool program that runs 8:30-11:00 am Monday through Friday. There are currently 28 children enrolled.

The program operates out of the following classrooms: infants (birth until 18 months), toddlers (18 months through two), and preschool (three through five-year-olds). An inspection of each room was completed. There is a second toddler room that is currently not being used due to a staffing shortage. Artificial lighting is used in each room because windows are not available on the lower level of the church. The rooms are decorated with pictures of the children, the children's art projects, and posters to assist the children with the learning process, such as the alphabet, shapes, colors and numbers. The children's birthdays were posted. There is an area for circle time.

The centers observed on the day of the licensing visit include library, Lego/blocks, table toys, games, puzzles, transportation, art, dramatic play, Play-Doh 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.

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The program uses a variety of resources to develop lesson plans. Activities are planned around themes. The length of the theme depends on the topic and the children's interest level. Lesson plans were available for review.

Daily sheets are being maintained for the children under two-years-old.

The infant room has two areas that are divided by an accordion curtain. One half is where the cribs are located, and the other half is where the children are cared for when they are awake. You must always maintain visual supervision of the children in both rooms. If there is an infant sleeping, you must position the crib so you can see the child.

There are not phones in every room. There is a phone outside the infant room and in the office. There are emergency numbers with the center's address and phone number posted near the phones. In addition, each room has an emergency posting with phone numbers, the center's address and phone number. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and evacuation diagrams were posted by the main program doors and outdoor exits throughout the center. Daily schedules were posted in each room.

All the children, except for the infants, sleep in a nap room. They use cots to nap.

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. I reviewed documentation of monthly playground inspections. The radon test was completed in July 2025 and is good for five years. Results were within EPA guidelines. The fuel burning inspection was completed and no concerns were noted. A carbon monoxide detector is in the hallway on the ceiling near the entrance. Outlets were protected. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 09/24/25.

The program does not participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), but it does follow the guidelines. The center provides the children with breakfast, lunch and a morning and afternoon snack. Ms. Heichel and Ms. Herzmann are the cooks. The center has four rotating menus for the summer season and four rotating menus for the winter season. All the children except for the infants are served their meals in a lunchroom. The food is dished out for the children. Family style is not used. Disposable products are mostly used. Dishes are returned to the kitchen to be washed in the dishwasher. Menus were posted.

The parents provide the infants with formula, baby food, and cereal until the children start table food. Bottles are prepared in the classroom. Staff members said the bottles are washed with soap and water in the classroom. Bottles must be sanitized. The other dishes are sent to the kitchen to be washed. Dishes are put through the kitchen dishwasher. I would recommend putting the bottles through the dishwasher also so they are sanitized.

There are two refrigerators and one upright freezer in the lunchroom area. There were thermometers present. There is a refrigerator in the infant room. A thermometer was present. Food items were stored according to the NHSPS guidelines.

The center uses bleach and water to sanitize the food tables and disinfect the changing tables.

I discussed diaper changing procedures with the infant room staff members and observed a diaper change in the toddler room. The infant room staff members were completing diaper changes correctly. In the toddler room the staff member left the gloves on through the entire process. Gloves are considered soiled and must be removed before putting on the new diaper and dressing the child. I did discuss the proper procedure with the staff member. There was not a pattern of disregard so this will not be cited.

There are multiple sinks and diaper changing tables in the center. Handwashing and diaper changing procedures were posted in all locations.

The program has a fenced-in playground. Rubber mulch is used for fall surface cushioning. There is a piece of climbing equipment that has slides, a play castle and other activities. Shade is primarily provided by the building. The program also has use of the church gym (fellowship hall).

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.

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Staff and children's files were reviewed at the time of the licensing visit. I reviewed six children files. They were in great condition.

I reviewed two staff files. They were in great condition.

I reviewed policy and procedures, staff and parent handbooks. Most of the necessary written emergency procedures and policies were present. You must add a written policy that parents have unlimited access to their children. Emergency Preparedness Plans have been completed.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

The leadership of the program is committed to providing a safe environment for the children. They have good knowledge of licensing standards and make sure they are followed within the center. Staff members had terrific interaction with the children in each room. They made the learning environment fun and inviting. In the infant room, staff members sat on the floor with the children and held children on their laps. They had good communication about schedules. In the toddler room the staff members were working on potty training and doing diaper changes. In the preschool room the children were doing an art activity where they got to pick out their favorites colors of paint to paint a mitten. Staff members had good teamwork in each room. Staff members had good reminders to cover sneezes and coughs and good handwashing reminders. Staff members provided the children with praise but used positive redirection when necessary. They were flexible but maintained a routine for the children. They took the children to gym to run because it was too cold to go outside. The children appeared to have fun in the program.

Ms. Heichel states the parents like the set-up of the infant room.

Ms. Heichel states the center is small and parents like the more intimate interaction with children. Staff members ae on a first name basis with the families.

Ms. Heichel states she and Ms. Herzmann have worked together for 24 years and she is thankful to the lead teacher in the preschool room, Jennifer Wittenberg, who has been with them almost nine years.

Ms. Heichel states the program is a separate entity of the church because they pay their own bills, but they are a mission of the church. Being inside the church provides them a great location and the church will help the center out where they can. They have a gift giving tree during Christmas time and the congregation donates items.

Ms. Heichel states the church hired a new custodian and he does more cleaning within the center. He vacuums the hallways and cleans the bathrooms. The church pays for the paper towels they use in the bathrooms.

Ms. Heichel states they try to hire staff members who have center experience.

The program provides a nurturing Christian environment to children and their families.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

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

The center had a terrific visit. Please follow up with the toddler room staff members to make sure they conduct diaper

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changes correctly. Also, please make sure infant room staff members are sanitizing the bottles.

An administrative change is being made to change the licensing end period to 02/01/2028

Date: 02/02/2026

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**.