Iowa Department of Human Services
CHILD CARE CENTER EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE

Name of Center: Stepping Stones Child Care Center Inc **Enrollment:** 120 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 26087

Street: 701 S 3rd AVE **City:** Winterset Iowa **Zip** 50273 **County:** Madison

Mailing Address: 701 S 3rd AVE, Winterset, IA, 50273

Director's Name: Angie Kirk **Phone Number:** 515-462-5831

On-Site Supervisor(s): Cortni Kirk, Ambre Benge, Terri Finnell, Donna Christiansen **E-Mail:** dacmab242003@yahoo.com

Date(s) of Visit: 03-11-2025

X **Licensing Visit** X **Unannounced Visit** **Off Year Visit** **Administrative Change**

LICENSING VISITS

New Application X **Re-Application** **NA**

Signed Application (470-0722) Received X **Yes** **No** **NA** **Date Signed:** 02-07-2025

FIRE INSPECTION X **State** **Local** **NA** **Is Fire Inspection Approved?** X **Yes** **No** **NA**

Date Inspected: 10-01-2023

Comments : State Fire Marshal inspections are due at least every three years. The date on the last inspection form was listed as 10/1/23 although that fell on a Sunday.

LICENSE TYPE: X **Child Care** **Preschool (ages 3-5 meets three hours or less per day)**

Financial Type: X Profit Non-Profit NA

Accredition: Accredited NAEYC NSACA Other X NA

Program Serves: X Infants (0-23 mo.) X 2 Years X Preschool-Age X School-Age

Get-Well Evening Care Special Needs

SCHEDULE: X Year-round School-Year Summer Only

HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General	15	24	44	60	143
Summer					0

QRS Rating: 3

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 04-01-2025 to 04-01-2027
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Nate Knepper **Date:** 03-12-2025

I. IF CURRENT LICENSE IS PROVISIONAL, IDENTIFY THE CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

N/A.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

A licensing visit was conducted on 3/11/25. The owner/director was present throughout this visit. The on-site supervisors were present throughout portions of this visit.

All areas of the program were observed. These areas observed consisted of classroom observations and activities, ratios, nutritional practices, health and safety practices, playground observation, field trip and transportation practices, and administrative review.

Stepping Stones Child Care Center is located in Winterset, IA. The owner/director is Angie Kirk. Angie has been the owner and director of the center since 1999. Cortni Kirk is one on-site supervisor. Cortni has an AA and BA degree in Liberal Arts and Education and has worked at this center off and on for several years. Ambre Benge is another on-site supervisor as of 2/7/17. Ambre has worked at the center since 2009. Terri Finnell is the third on-site supervisor. Terri has a BA degree and has worked at this center since 2013. Donna Christiansen is the most recent on-site supervisor as of 4/17/18. Donna has worked at Stepping Stones for many years.

The center serves children two weeks in age to roughly 12 years in age using a combination of the Creative Learning Curriculum, Al's Pals Curriculum, and Handwriting Without Tears Curriculum. There are five classrooms. The infant room has a capacity of 12 children. The toddler classroom has a capacity of 13 children, but the center caps the room at 12 children. The two/three year old classroom has a capacity of 11 children. The Pre-K classroom has a capacity of 47 children. The school-age classroom has a capacity of 60 children.

During the visit, children were observed in a variety of activities. Activities observed consisted of playing outside on the playground, washing their hands, sitting down for lunch, napping in cribs, engaged in a group story activity being facilitated by staff, and engaged in free-choice play at different learning stations made available in classrooms. Staff were engaged with children and interacting with them throughout the visit.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The owner/director has her National Administrator Credential.

The center participates in IQ4K which is a voluntary program based on best practice.

The center participates in the food program (CACFP).

The center has a good mix of tenured (some over 15 years) and new staff. Monthly staff meetings are held. There is an element of the center having a family environment yet management having clear expectations for the center.

Staff files were again nicely organized. Staff are encouraged to get more training hours (20+) than the minimum required amount of professional development training hours required.

There is a secure entrance into the center.

The center participates in the 5-2-1-0 program as it relates to a healthy lifestyle.

Several staff members continue to participate in TEACH, WAGES, CDA's, and other degrees. One on-site supervisor now has a teaching license.

The center is uses the online application Brightwheel to even better communicate with parents.

Enrollment has increased over the past year.

The center has installed hand-free soap dispensers and water facets over the past year.

Staff bios and credentials are posted near the main entrance.

A security camera system is in place.

The center employs two full-time cooks.

The center has good community partnerships.

Good child-staff activities and interactions were observed throughout the visit.

IV. IDENTIFY THE ASPECTS OF OPERATION THAT FALL BELOW THE STANDARDS REVIEWED:

109.10(9): First aid kit: The center shall ensure that a clearly labeled first aid kit that is sufficient to address minor injury or trauma is available and accessible to staff at all times when children are: In the center. In the outdoor play area. On field trips.
All first-aid kits should be labeled.

109.11(3)a: Center shall ensure that: Facility and premises are sanitary, safe, and hazard free. Adequate indoor and outdoor space is provided. The outdoor area shall include safe play equipment and area of shade.
1. The zip ties on the playground should be cut as discussed and described during the visit.
2. There was a bike that was in need of new pedals. THIS IS A REPEAT ISSUE FROM LAST YEAR. THIS BIKE WAS TAKEN OUT OF CIRCULATION AT THE VISIT.
3. There are still some bolts that need cut/capped so that no more than two threads are showing. THIS IS A REPEAT ISSUE FROM LAST YEAR.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Radon testing was last tested 1/4/24 - 4/5/24. Radon levels came back below the 4.0 cutoff. Radon can now be done every five years if levels are below 4.0. So long as radon levels remain below 4.0, the center can remain on a five-year testing plan. If at the next testing, levels are 4.0 or higher in any classroom, the center will have to retest (and possibly consult with a radon mitigation specialist) and then go back to a two-year plan for testing.

The annual furnace inspection was last completed on 12/3/24.

For transportation/field trips, the center has two vans and a bus. These were observed. These vehicles are also regularly serviced.

I-Power was discussed at the visit. It appears all staff have I-Power profiles and uploading training hours.

The license, consultant posting, mandatory reporter posting, and food menu should all be posted next/near each other.

It was noted that the stove in the kitchen recently had a part break. A new stove was already on order.

The children's art work posted on the loft in the preschool classroom should be rearranged so that better supervision of the loft area can be achieved.

A new, full, two-year license is recommended.

*Note: If you are the Child Care Center Director and you feel something is unclear or unjustly cited, please contact your DHS Licensing Consultant to discuss the issue. The child care director may also send a response which will be placed in the licensing file.

*Note: If you are a member of the general public, there may be additional information contained in the public file. You may contact the DHS Licensing Consultant to inquire.