Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Kids Express Daycare

Provider No.: 29523

Address: 102 Prospect St, Sanborn, IA, 51248

County: Obrien

Director's Name: Melissa Michels

On-Site Supervisor:

Phone Number: 7129305535

E-Mail: kexpress@tcaexpress.net

HHS Visit Date: 02/17/2026

Licensing Period: 03/01/2025 to 03/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 12/16/2025

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

- [ ] PTO
- [X] Licensing Visit
- [ ] Drop In
- [ ] 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	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM		
Monday	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM		
Tuesday	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM		
Wednesday	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM		
Thursday	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM		
Friday	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM		
Saturday	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM		

Program Population Served:

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	12	11	13	21	57
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

I completed an unannounced visit to Kids Express Daycare in Sanborn on February 17, 2025. During my visit, I spoke with the director, Melissa Michels. Melissa holds a master's degree in mental health and a bachelor's degree in behavioral development and early childhood education. She brings many years of experience working in the childcare field, which is evident in the way the program is organized and operated.

Kids Express occupies three rooms in a renovated building in Sanborn: an infant room, a room for two- and three-year-olds, and a room for children four and older. The center offers a preschool program for three-year-olds on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. Preschool takes place in the "four and up" room, which is not used during those mornings. The program operates Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. There are currently 60 children enrolled, which is an increase from last year. At the time of my visit, 25 children were present.

I observed all areas of the center, including classrooms, activities, nutrition practices, health and safety procedures, playground, and administrative records. A daily schedule was posted, and the rooms were bright and engaging with colors, shapes, picture schedules, job charts, children's artwork, and the alphabet displayed throughout. Staff were actively involved with the children, assisting with activities, talking with them, reminding them of rules, and sitting at the tables during meals. The center uses a Creative Curriculum, which means learning is based on exploration and hands-on experiences. This approach encourages children to learn through play, make choices, and develop social-emotional skills alongside academic concepts. I observed positive interactions between staff and children, including a lively music activity. I also observed teacher-led activities that encouraged children to use positive "I" statements such as "I matter," "I belong," and "I am capable," which promote confidence and a sense of belonging.

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The infant room had an adequate number of toys and equipment for the number of infants enrolled. Staff provided nurturing care and stimulation, with good verbal interaction throughout the visit. The room is arranged to provide a safe environment, includes a changing table, and has an emergency exit ramp for easy access if needed.

Meals and snacks are prepared onsite in a kitchen that is inaccessible to children. Meals are served family-style, and staff sit with the children during mealtime to assist and interact. The center participates in the CACFP program, and menus are posted for families to view. Health and safety practices were observed and followed. Medication is stored securely in a locked box or out of children's reach. Tables are sanitized before meals, and I observed proper handwashing by staff and children. First aid kits are well-stocked for minor injuries. Fire and tornado drills are documented monthly. Radon testing was completed and is within normal limits, and the center has a mitigation system in place. The furnace inspection was completed on December 30, 2025, and the carbon monoxide detector is functioning properly. While the center meets sanitation standards, a deep cleaning would be beneficial.
The playground is large and fenced-in, with age-appropriate equipment for each age group. The surfacing material is rubber mulch, and shade is available. Monthly playground inspections are documented. The center does not transport children; transportation is provided by the school.

Ms. Michaels reported that she and her staff have been working with their CCR&R Consultant to implement five preventive practices designed to reduce challenging behaviors and promote positive interactions. These practices include maintaining a high ratio of positive attention to reinforce desired behaviors, establishing predictable daily schedules to provide consistency, teaching clear routines for common activities, setting and reinforcing simple behavioral expectations, and actively teaching social skills such as sharing and turn-taking. Together, these strategies create a structured, supportive environment that helps children develop self-regulation and social competence.

The center is entering an exciting new phase as it prepares to relocate to a dedicated wing of the nursing home. Plans include hiring a music teacher to enhance programming and foster creative engagement. Melissa, in collaboration with the nursing home director, is actively developing activities designed to benefit both the children and the nursing home residents, promoting intergenerational connections. The anticipated opening date for the new space is this fall.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

The center has recently submitted its documentation to pursue IQ4K Level 1 certification, marking an important step toward quality improvement. Achieving Level 1 demonstrates that the program meets Iowa's licensing standards and is committed to enhancing care and education for children. This certification provides access to valuable resources, training opportunities, and technical assistance, helping the center strengthen its practices. It also reassures families that the program is proactive in meeting recognized quality benchmarks. Level 1 serves as the foundation for advancing to higher levels of IQ4K, which offer additional benefits and incentives as the center continues its journey toward excellence.

The center is also collaborating with a CCR&R financial consultant to explore additional options for the program. Staff are knowledgeable about TEACH and WAGES programming available in Iowa, which supports professional development and wage enhancement for early childhood educators.

The program has implemented a new, well-organized record-keeping system that is greatly appreciated. In addition, staff are actively uploading training documentation into the iPower system to ensure compliance and easy access to professional development records

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

109.12(4)b: Each infant and toddler shall be diapered in a sanitary manner as frequently as needed at a central diapering area. Diapering, sanitation, and hand-washing procedures shall be posted and implemented in every diapering area. There shall be at least one changing table for every 15 infants. Please ensure that appropriate diapering procedure is followed.

109.13(5): Centers shall ensure that food preparation and storage procedures are consistent with the recommendations of the CACFPs. Please ensure to date and put in appropriate container any food that has been opened.

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

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5. Special Notes/Recommendations

The center will email consultant by 03/31/26 confirming that all aspects that fall below standards have been corrected. It

A full license will remain in effect at this time.

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

Date: 02/17/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Leann Steinhauer

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**.