

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

**Name of Center:** Active Minds Early Learning Academy **Enrollment:** 54 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 43324

**Street:** 1744 Falls AVE **City:** Waterloo **Iowa Zip** 50701 **County:** Black Hawk

**Mailing Address:** 1744 Falls AVE, Waterloo, IA, 50701

**Director's Name:** Veronica Armstrong **Phone Number:** 319-234-1060

**On-Site Supervisor(s):** Veronica Armstrong **E-Mail:** ronni@activemindsia.com

**Date(s) of Visit:** 06-09-2020

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:** 05-19-2020

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

**Date Inspected:** 10-15-2019

**Comments :**

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

**Financial Type:** X **Profit** **Non-Profit** **NA**

**Accreditation:** **Accredited** **NAEYC** **NSACA** **Other** X **NA**

**Program Serves:** **Infants (0-23 mo.)** X **2 Years** X **Preschool-Age** X **School-Age**  
**Get-Well** **Evening Care** X **Special Needs**

**SCHEDULE:** X **Year-round** **School-Year** **Summer Only**

HOURS:	<u>Year-round</u>		<u>School-Year</u>	<u>Summer Only</u>	
LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General	0	12	30	18	60
Summer					0

**QRS Rating:** N/A

<b>RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:</b>	
X	<b>FULL</b> license from 07-01-2020 to 07-01-2022
	<b>PROVISIONAL</b> license from
	<b>DENIAL</b> of initial application
	<b>SUSPENSION</b> of license
	<b>REVOCATION</b> of license

Licensing Consultant: Becky Frost

Date: 06-11-2020

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

N/A

## II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

On 06/09/20 I made an announced licensing visit to Active Minds Early Learning Academy in Waterloo. Licensing visits are currently announced to the Covid 19 pandemic. I met with Veronica "Ronni" Armstrong, the owner and director of the program. Ms. Armstrong has a BA in early childhood and elementary education and an endorsement in special education for children ages birth to eight-years-old. She has a master's degree in education. Ms. Armstrong opened the center on 05/21/14. Deb Marshall is in charge if Ms. Armstrong is away from the center. The center has ten employees.

The program operates out of a free standing building. The program operates Monday through Friday from 5:30 am until 6:00 pm and serves children ages two through twelve-years-old. There are 54 children enrolled.

The center operates out of three rooms. They have a room for two and three-year-olds, a room for preschool children and a room for school-age children. An inspection of each room was completed. Artificial lighting is mostly used, but the doors do provide some natural lighting. The rooms are decorated with the children's art projects, and posters to assist the children with the learning process, such as the alphabet, colors and numbers. There is an area for circle time.

The centers used by the center include library, blocks, table toys, games, puzzles, transportation, art, computers, puppets, dramatic play, writing, math, science, listening, Play-Doh, woodworking, sensory table and music. They are currently putting out a smaller number of choices and changing them out every week due to the pandemic. 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 were easily accessible to the children.

The program uses a variety of resources to create the lesson plans. They use Creative Curriculum as an outline. Ms. Armstrong uses Handwriting Without Tears, Day by Day Preschool Plans through Mailbox magazine and Moving Through Math. Ms. Armstrong states they work on numerical integration. They have a literacy and math goal they work on each week. Lesson plans were available for review.

There was a phone with emergency numbers in the classrooms and the kitchen. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and diagrams were posted by the program doors and outdoor exits. A daily schedule was posted in each room.

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. I reviewed documentation of monthly playground inspections. A radon test was completed in November 2019. Results were above EPA guidelines. The program installed a radon mitigation system in May 2020 and plan to retest the rooms in a month. The annual fuel burning inspection was completed and no concerns were noted. A carbon monoxide detector was on site in the preschool room. Outlets were protected. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 10/15/19.

The program does participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The program provides breakfast, lunch and a morning and afternoon snack. A four week rotation of menus is used. Paris Haynes is the cook. Meals were served family style in the rooms prior to the pandemic, but at this time the plates are prepared for the children. Menus were posted. Food items were stored according the NHSPS guidelines. The refrigerator and chest freezer had thermometers present.

The center uses bleach and water to sanitize the food tables. I observed the teacher prepare the tables for snack and lunch and proper procedures were followed. Oxiver Tb is used to disinfect the changing tables. Lysol spray is being used to disinfect all high touch surfaces. I discussed the process of diaper changes with staff members. One staff member was leaving the gloves on through the entire process. I explained to her that gloves must be removed prior to the new diaper as they are considered soiled. This will not be cited as there was not a pattern of disregard. Handwashing and diaper changing procedures were posted in all of the mandated areas. There is a bathroom in each of the program areas.

The parent information is located on a bulletin board inside the entrance. The mandatory reporter, child care consultant and the handbook availability were posted. The license was conspicuously hung. A no-smoking sign was posted at the entrance.

The center uses the Hi Mama app as a communication tool with parents. The app documents the information contained on daily sheets and is also able to provide photos. The program also has emergency contact information for each child programmed in the app.

During this pandemic, the program is taking the temperature of every child who enters the center. Parents are not allowed to walk through the center, but bring the child inside the entrance. The center has a thorough cleaning and sanitizing schedule. There are no plush items in the center. Cots are used to nape and bedding is washed daily. Children are not allowed to bring any items from home into the center.

Staff and children files were reviewed at the time of the licensing visit. I reviewed six children files. One file did not have a physical and one had an invalid immunization certificate because it was not signed and dated by medical personnel. This will not be cited because there was not a pattern of disregard.

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

I reviewed policy and procedures, staff and parent handbooks. The necessary written emergency procedures and policies were present. Emergency Preparedness Plans have been completed.

### **III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:**

The program works with Central Rivers AEA routinely to assist children with identified needs.

There are pictures of the staff members with information about each of them in the entrance.

Ms. Armstrong states they have strong partnerships with non-profit organizations, such as Central Rivers AEA and Child Care Resource and Referral.

The program is currently a bus stop for Becker Elementary.

Ms. Armstrong states they provide year-around preschool and provide children with a high quality learning experience.

Ms. Armstrong has several children in her care that require additional attention or assistance because of identified needs. She takes on several children that other centers will not care for. Ms. Armstrong states they work hard and try several things to meet the needs of the children and make the environment work for the children. They are able to separate the child from their behaviors and work with them in that manner. They do not look at it as the child is the problem.

Ms. Armstrong states she has been told that she spends a lot of time building community among the staff members. She states they have great relationships with one another. Ms. Armstrong states she has monthly staff meetings and she brings treats weekly for her staff members. She at times has provided small gifts to them to thank them for their hard work. Ms. Armstrong states her staff members know she has an open door policy and they are all comfortable talking with her about all of their problems. They know she will address the problems in a non-confrontational manner. She will write her workers up if necessary.

Ms. Armstrong states her staff members have strong relationships with the children they care for. She states the staff members take what she trains them with and utilizes the skills in the classrooms for room management and use of humor.

Ms. Armstrong states they make literacy and math a big part of their program. She provides a structured learning environment and the children enjoy themselves. The children to learn to manage themselves and they place an emphasis on social skills, not just academic skills.

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

N/A

**V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:**

A full license is issued. All DHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period.

\*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.