Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Pathways Learning Academy at Northpoint Church

Provider No.: 53060

Address: 9901 NW 62nd Ave, Johnston, IA, 50131

County: Polk

Director's Name: Alesha Benkert

On-Site Supervisor: Bobbi Evans (pending)

Phone Number: 5153493030

E-Mail: marrisha.prior@learningcaregroup.com 9321@pathwayslearningacademy.com

HHS Visit Date: 03/20/2026

Licensing Period: 04/01/2026 to 04/01/2028

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 11/26/2025

Comments: Johnston - Grimes Fire Marshal. For licensing requirements, these inspections are due at least every three years.

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			
Monday	6:30 AM to 5:30 PM		
Tuesday	6:30 AM to 5:30 PM		
Wednesday	6:30 AM to 5:30 PM		
Thursday	6:30 AM to 5:30 PM		
Friday	6:30 AM to 5:30 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	52	28	110	0	190
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

A licensing inspection was conducted on 3/20/26. The director and the on-site supervisor (pending) were both present for this inspection.

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.

Pathways Learning Academy at Northpoint Church in Johnston is a new center that was given permission to open on 2/2/26 under HHS supervision. The center is owned by Learning Group that also owns several other centers in the Des Moines metro area. The director of this program is Alesha Benkert. Alesha has a BA degree and has past experience working in child care. The pending on-site supervisor is Bobbi Evans. Bobbi has a CDA and also has past experience working in child care.

The center serves children six weeks in age through preschool age. The center uses the learning curriculum, As We Grow. There are a total of 13 classrooms as well as a multi-purpose/indoor gym area. Child capacity of classrooms are as follows:
Preschool: 20
Toddler: 12
Two's: 14
Preschool: 20
EPS: 14
Two's: 14

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Toddler: 12
EPS: 14
Toddler: 12
Infant: 8
Preschool: 24
Infants: 8
Preschool: 18

Total child enrollment at the time of the inspection was 26 children.

During the inspection, children were observed napping in cribs, being held and bottle fed, washing hands, engaged in free-choice play at the different learning stations in the classrooms, and playing in the multi purpose classroom. Toys, cribs, cots, and other equipment are being sanitized daily. Proper diaper changing procedures were discussed. Staff gave specific answers as to where they relocate to for monthly fire and tornado drills.

NUTRITION: The center has a big, full-size kitchen that they share with the church. The center has their own individual refrigerator and freezer space and cabinet space for food storage. The center also has a full-time cook. The center serves breakfast, lunch, and a PM snack to children. The food menu posted was meeting CACFP requirements.

TRANSPORTATION/FIELD TRIPS: The center does not go on field trips and they do not transport children. The center will bring in different agencies who give presentations to children throughout the year.

PLAYGROUND: The playground was not observed fully at the inspection as it was under construction to repair/replace some of the field turf areas. The playground was observed more fully on 12/12/25 when a pre-opening walk through was conducted. The center playground areas are divided up into different areas and fenced off by age of children. The center does weekly playground inspections.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

This is a new center that meets a need in the community. Enrollment is increasing and the center has a wait list for summer care.

There is a secure entrance into the center area of the building. Security cameras have also been installed.

The center employs a safety captain to review all inspections (fire/tornado/playground/etc.) daily and monthly.

The center employs a full-time cook. The center also has a full kitchen.

The center is owned by Learning Care which also owns several other centers in the Des Moines metro area. All centers operate in similar fashion. The directors of these centers meet regularly either in person or online for meetings with each other.

Monthly staff meetings are held at this program.

The center has a good working relationship with the church.

The center uses the Sprout About application for daily sheets, etc.

The director and pending on-site supervisor stated they believed they had a good group of staff who work well with each other.

Staff pictures and bios were posted near the main entrance.

The center was clean, had good lighting, and was nicely decorated.

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3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

109.10(13)b: Emergency instructions, phone numbers, and diagrams for fire, tornado, and flood shall be visibly posted and documented at least once a month for fire and tornado. Records shall be maintained for current and previous year. February fire and tornado drills were not documented.

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

N/A.

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

This consultant also licenses the center, Everbrook Academy in Urbandale who also have the same owners. This center uses the same handbooks as Everbrook Academy. The only thing missing when that inspection was conducted on 12/5/26 was an Access Policy. An Access Policy was emailed to this center as well to add to their handbooks.

Radon testing is due within one year of the center's open date so no later than 2/2/27. All classrooms and the multi purpose room will need to be tested. If radon levels are below 4.0 in all areas tested, the center can move to a five year testing plan. If levels in any classroom come back 4.0 or higher, the center will have to have a mitigation plan, retest, and at least temporarily move back to testing every two years.

The fuel burning/HVAC annual inspections should start to be conducted on later than 2/2/27. The center should be sure to have copies of these inspections from the church for their own records (licensing inspections).

It was noted that the carbon monoxide detectors are built into the building system.

The center should reach out to their center nurse consultant in regards to a seizure action plan for a child.

The on-site supervisor form was emailed to the center after the inspection concluded.

In regards to difficult child behaviors, the director and on-site supervisor stated they have behavioral action plans the corporation uses. They teach staff and emphasize documentation, teamwork, and they also stress communication with each other.

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

Date: 03/23/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Nate Knepper

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**.