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

Name of Center: Hand in Hand-Indian Creek **Enrollment:** 72 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 47222

Street: 2900 Indian Creek RD **City:** Marion Iowa **Zip** 52302 **County:** Linn

Mailing Address: 103 N Center Point RD, Hiawatha, IA, 52233

Director's Name: Kathy Kolthoff **Phone Number:** 319-200-4840

On-Site Supervisor(s): Jessica Sivertsen **E-Mail:** hih@handinhandinc.com

Date(s) of Visit: 02-13-2023

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

LICENSING VISITS

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

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

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

Date Inspected: 11-03-2021

Comments :

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: Infants (0-23 mo.) 2 Years 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				83	83
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 05-01-2022 to 05-01-2024
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons **Date:** 02-16-2023

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

Not applicable

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

Hand in Hand operates multiple programs throughout the community and has been in operation for 21 years. Specifically, Hand in Hand - Indian Creek is located inside Indian Creek Elementary School which is part of the Linn Mar Community School District. Hand in Hand - Indian Creek commenced operations in June, 2016. Hand in Hand – Indian Creek is a profit program which operates year-round Monday through Friday 6:30am to 6:00pm. During the summer, full days of emergency closing (e.g. snow day), and some breaks (e.g. winter break, spring break), this program has the ability to combine with other Hand in Hand sites. Hand in Hand - Indian Creek serves school-age children. Current enrollment is 72.

Hand in Hand multi-site owner/director is Kathy Kolthoff. Ms. Kolthoff holds a degree in Early Childhood Education and Business Management. Ms. Kolthoff has achieved the National Administrators Credential (NAC) and is a member of National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Hand in Hand multi-site management personnel includes Ms. Sara Swestka who has been with Hand in Hand for over 20 years. Ms. Swestka holds her Bachelor of Art degree in Elementary Education and Early Childhood Education. Ms. Swestka has many years of experience working with children, continues to participate in much child development related training, and has achieved NAC. Hand in Hand multisite curriculum specialist Katie Simmons has been with Hand in Hand for over 17 years, and specifically, been part of the management team since 2011. Ms. Simmons has an AA degree in early childhood education, has much experience working with children, and continues to participate in child development related training. Hand in Hand multisite school-age coordinator is Katie Little. Ms. Little has been with Hand in Hand since December, 2017. Ms. Little has a BA degree in nursing, an AA degree in marketing management, over 6 years of experience working with children, and continues to participate in much child development related training. Site specific on-site supervisor of Hand in Hand - Indian Creek is Jessica Sivertsen. Ms. Sivertsen has been the on-site supervisor since November 2022. Ms. Sivertsen has over 7 years experience working with children and continues to participate in much child development related training.

On 2/13/2023, program space was observed.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

Hand in Hand offers a variety of early learning/childcare programming options to help meet the needs of children and families in the community.

The year 2023 marks Hand in Hand's 21st year of providing childcare and early learning services to children and their families throughout the community. Congratulations on celebrating 21 years! Specifically, Hand in Hand - Indian Creek be in their 7th year of operation during 2023.

The philosophy of Hand in Hand is to "…understand your needs and your child's needs and offer convenient options....that go way beyond after school needs...offers a variety of activities that promote life skills such as teamwork, sportsmanship, creativity, and leadership..."

Hand in Hand has the following website for families and the community to learn more about their programs:

http://handinhandinc.com/.

Hand in Hand has a history of participating in quality initiatives including local quality initiatives.

Founding original owner Ms. Kolthoff is a local entrepreneur invested in the local and surrounding communities. Ownership and management of Hand in Hand has remained consistent. This includes owner Ms. Kolthoff, management personnel Ms. Swestka, curriculum specialist Ms. Simmons, school-age coordinator Ms. Little, and specific on-site supervisor. Management is extremely organized, and in turn, the program operates smoothly. Hand in Hand has noteworthy systems of organization in place to help ensure administrative items are completed and maintained as required. Management is knowledgeable of licensing guidelines as well as their own policies and procedures. Management has completed NAC training.

Management team continues to be mentors throughout the community as well as part of an online innovative national director social media group. Hand in Hand management team also continues to be part of a local task force known as "Building Community Childcare Solutions" which examines childcare needs and solutions. In 2021, Hand in Hand management team established an optional monthly employee wellness challenge to help focus on lowering stress and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. In 2022, Hand in Hand undertook the immense task of establishing a company-wide unique online process for staff onboarding, training, and continuous transfer of knowledge. This also lead to an updating of the company's Employee Manual and a new Lead Teacher Manual both of which have become part of the company's online staff onboarding program.

Since the last monitoring visit, Hand in Hand -Wilkins has retained as well as hired some new staff. Seasoned staff reported celebrating 5 years with Hand in Hand. On-site supervisor Ms. Sivertsen acknowledged this is the first year she has worked solely with school-age children and she has been enjoying it. To help support employees, management has established an annual staff requirements calendar book with necessary forms, materials, and so on as well as a quarterly employee newsletter that includes helpful policy reminders and tips and classroom tools/resources. Management continues to support employees through an accrued point system rewarding staff for their daily dedication, the ability to collaborate among all Hand in Hand sites to share materials, curriculum, joys, challenges, and ideas/planning, and staff incentives (e.g. childcare, snack cart, social media contests, wellness challenges). Ms. Sivertsen discussed how she has greatly appreciated the supports Hand in Hand has provided her in her new role as on-site supervisor. Ms. Sivertsen reported being proud of her team of employees who work well together.

Hand in Hand - Indian Creek has a collaborative partnership with the school district. The school building and grounds are well maintained. School custodial staff, school administration, school nurse, and school food service personnel help ensure the children's space is sanitary and hazard free each day. The school kitchen is inspected at least annually by the health department. There is an AED on-site. The program has regular access to the school gymnasium for large gross motor activities. Ms. Sivertsen talked favorably about the program's relationship with the school.

Hand in Hand - Indian Creek has emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. Hand in Hand sites have successfully navigated through historic local flooding (Flood of 2008), the 8/10/2020 Derecho Storm event and 2019 pandemic. In 2023, Hand in Hand began monthly employee safety plan reviews focusing on a series of topics including first-aid, housekeeping, ergonomics, proper lifting, workplace violence, and slips, trips and falls.

Hand in Hand - Indian Creek continues efforts at optimal communication between the program/staff and families. The program has an organized parent-staff/program information center, offers regular program newsletters, utilizes technological communication resources, and supports family programming activities. Hand in Hand - Indian Creek continues to offer a character counts curriculum, a reading incentive program called "Reading Rainbow", and homework time/assistance. Staff reported 2023 summer camp enrollment will soon be underway.

Hand in Hand collaborates well with many community partners including local small businesses, local school districts, health professionals, and other childcare owners/directors (locally and nationally).

Hand in Hand – Indian Creek supports a “safe shoe” policy to encourage ease of play.

Each child is engaged in a daily health check upon arrival for early detection of apparent illness, communicable disease, or unusual condition or behavior which may adversely affect the child or the group. The program has policies and procedures in place for cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing. Cleaning supplies were observed onsite.

On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were nurturing and attentive to the children's needs. The area of study included Valentine's Day. Children's accomplishment (e.g. artwork) were displayed in the program space. Evidence of an ongoing science experiment (e.g. vinegar candy hearts) was observed with children talking excitedly to staff about being able to view it more closely afterschool. Children and families were observed to be warmly greeted upon arrival. Activities observed were many (e.g. small group work, individual center play experiences, book reading). Staff provided a companionable

presence while allowing children to have choice in their programming experiences (e.g. board games, card games, imaginative play options, reading, crafting). Routine transitions (e.g. clean-up activities, breakfast rituals, movement from childcare to school day) worked smoothly into the program's welcoming and cooperative environment. Staff were overheard providing children with many words of encouragement, offering positive redirection when needed, and engaging children in meaningful discussion. One child was observed to have built a "claw" with staff encouraging ingenuity by asking "are you going to use that for clean-up today". Children responded well to staff and appeared to be truly enjoying their childcare experiences.

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

None noted.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Prior to children transitioning to school breakfast or any food service, please ensure good hand washing.

The program's license remains in full status. Thank you for the visit.

*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.