



CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Grace Fellowship Community Preschool

Provider No.: 31341

Address: 361 N 8th Ave W, Hartley, IA, 51346

County: Obrien

Director's Name: Sara Dodge

On-Site Supervisor: NA

Phone Number: 7129285665

E-Mail: msbdd@hotmail.com

HHS Visit Date: 04/07/2026

Licensing Period: 04/07/2025 to 04/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 10/17/2023

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

- ☐ PTO
- ☒ Licensing Visit
- ☐ Drop In
- ☐ Administrative Change

License Type:

- ☒ Full
- ☐ Provisional

Quality initiative:

- ☐ Accrediation

Program Duration:

- ☐ Year-Round
- ☒ School Year
- ☐ Summer Only



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HOURS:	<u>Year-round</u>	<u>School-Year</u>	<u>Summer Only</u>
Sunday			
Monday			
Tuesday		8:30 AM to 11:30 AM	
Wednesday		8:30 AM to 11:30 AM	
Thursday			
Friday		8:30 AM to 11:30 AM	
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

- ☐ Infant(0-<24 Months)
- ☐ Toddler
- ☒ PreSchool
- ☐ School Age
- ☐ All Ages

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General			20		20
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

I completed an unannounced visit on 04/07/26 to Grace Fellowship Community School. When I arrived, I was able to speak with Director Sarah Dodge, who greeted me warmly and was open and engaged throughout the visit. Ms. Dodge holds a degree in early childhood education, is licensed in the State of Iowa, and brings many years of experience to the program, which was evident in the way she spoke about the children and the curriculum.

The preschool operates on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. during the school year and serves three-year-olds. The program uses two rooms within the church, with one room thoughtfully arranged into a variety of inviting learning centers and table areas.

There are 14 children enrolled in the program, and all 14 were present and actively engaged during my visit and actively engaged during my visit.

I observed all areas of the center, including classrooms, activities, nutrition practices, health and safety procedures, playground, and administrative review.

A daily schedule of activities was posted, helping create a predictable rhythm for the children. The classroom walls featured a variety of cheerful learning materials, including shapes, colors, and the alphabet, along with children's artwork that added a personal, welcoming touch. The overall environment felt warm, organized, and supportive of early learning and exploration. I observed a period of free play during which the children were engaged in various centers that encouraged dramatic play and imaginative interactions. During this time, when a child used the restroom, they returned to a table in the classroom where they moved a popsicle stick with their name on it to a new spot. This simple routine helped staff keep track



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of restroom breaks while also supporting the children in recognizing and reading their names. The process was calm, organized, and reinforced both independence and early literacy in a developmentally appropriate way. The preschool uses a biblical-themed curriculum, and during my visit I observed a lesson focused on Jonah and the whale. The children were eager to share what they knew about the story, and several were able to describe details about Jonah, the whale, and the message of the lesson. The activity also naturally incorporated science, as the children discussed the ocean and what kinds of animals live there. The class was engaged, curious, and enthusiastic, and the lesson provided a nice balance of faith-based learning and early educational concepts.

A fenced-in playground is located next to the building, and a large tree nearby provides natural shade for outdoor play. The equipment appeared to be in good repair, and the program uses pea gravel as the surfacing material. Ms. Dodge shared that monthly playground inspections are being completed to help ensure ongoing safety. The center provides snacks that follow the CACFP program, and both classroom spaces share a Jack-and-Jill bathroom. Handwashing signs were posted, and I observed both staff and children practicing good handwashing routines throughout the visit.

The refrigerator was clean and maintained at an appropriate temperature, with a thermometer in place for monitoring. Both rooms used by the preschool were observed to be clean, well-organized, and well-maintained. Staff were using appropriate sanitizing procedures, and all cleaning products were stored safely out of children's reach. The center does not provide transportation; however, they invite various visitors and learning activities into the classroom, which supports social development and helps the children interact comfortably with new people.

The center shared that their current goals include obtaining additional educational tools to enhance classroom learning, improving the use of technology within the program, and continuing to stay current with best practices in early childhood education. These goals reflect a thoughtful commitment to ongoing growth and providing children with a high-quality learning environment.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

This preschool is small, which offers many positive qualities for young children. The smaller group size allows staff to build strong, individualized relationships with each child and to respond quickly to their needs. Children benefit from a calmer environment with fewer transitions and less crowding, which often supports smoother social interactions and more focused learning. A small program also makes it easier for staff to maintain consistent routines, closely monitor developmental progress, and provide extra support when needed. Families often enjoy the close-knit, community feel that naturally develops in a smaller setting, helping create a warm and reassuring environment for both children and parents.

The children's files were very organized and up to date, reflecting the center's strong attention to detail and commitment to maintaining accurate, thorough records.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

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

5. Special Notes/Recommendations



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I discussed with Ms. Dodge regarding her oversight of behavior management related to helping childcare staff: 1) Understand expectations, 2) managing frustrations, 3) monitor performance.

Ms. Dodge shared that, as a small preschool, the staff know each child very well and also know one another's strengths and frustrations. This allows them to recognize when a colleague may be feeling overwhelmed and step in to offer support, which creates a calm and cooperative classroom atmosphere. During my visit, I observed strong classroom management, with children responding positively to the familiar

A full license is recommended at this time at this time.

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

Date: 04/07/2026

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>.