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

Name of Center: Frontier Childcare **Enrollment:** 60 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 24218

Street: 3021 78th ST **City:** Norway Iowa **Zip** 52318 **County:** Benton

Mailing Address: 3021 78th ST, Norway, IA, 52318

Director's Name: Shelly Huxford **Phone Number:** 319-227-7996

On-Site Supervisor(s): Sarah Sliter **E-Mail:** shelly.huxford@frontiercoop.com

Date(s) of Visit: 02-07-2025

X **Licensing Visit** X **Unannounced Visit** **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 X **State** **Local** **NA** **Is Fire Inspection Approved?** X **Yes** **No** **NA**

Date Inspected: 07-13-2023

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: X Infants (0-23 mo.) X 2 Years X 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	26	12	38	36	112
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 08-01-2025 to 08-01-2027
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons **Date:** 03-19-2025

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

Not applicable.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

Frontier Childcare is located in a building adjacent the Frontier Natural Products Co-op business. Frontier Childcare offers a variety of early learning and childcare opportunities to help meet the needs of children and families employed by Frontier. Frontier Childcare serves infant through school-age children. Current enrollment is 60.

The director of Frontier Childcare is Shelly Huxford. Ms. Huxford is currently celebrating 30 years of experience working with children! Ms. Huxford has been the director of this site for over 11 years and continues to participate in child development related training.

On 2/7/2025, program space was observed.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

Frontier Childcare is an on-site childcare at the Frontier Natural Products Co-op business and located in a predominantly rural area. Frontier Childcare provides many early learning and childcare opportunities to help meet the needs of children and families employed by Frontier.

According to the program's written policies, Frontier Childcare "…is a family-oriented business that provides on-site childcare for the benefit and convenience of Frontier and its employees…" The goal of the program is "…to provide quality care for children while their parents are at work…"

Frontier Childcare has the following website for families and the community to learn more about their business and childcare: https://www.newpi.coop/meet-the-locals/frontier-co-op

Frontier Childcare has a history of participation in quality initiatives including QRS and a local quality initiative. In May 2024, Frontier Childcare was noted in the online HR Brew's article entitled "How Frontier Co-op formalized a 40-plus-year commitment to childcare benefits" (https://www.hr-brew.com/stories/2024/05/14/frontier-co-op-onsite-childcare-iowa).

Frontier Childcare operates under an advisory board located at Frontier headquarters in Norway, Iowa. The headquarters is also home to their corporate offices, their Customer Service and Sales Departments, and to their Manufacturing for our Frontier and Simply Organic products. In addition, Frontier Direct, their wholesale distribution unit, operates from this location. Frontier resource use and waste objective is to achieve zero waste sent to landfill and to maximize the efficient use of materials. Products used (including paper and plastic products) are recyclable and/or able to be composted. Frontier Childcare participates in this initiative and their mission includes the Green Team.

Frontier Childcare supports a healthy organic lifestyle. Over 90% of childcare food served (including meats and fresh product) is organic. The program is committed to providing children with a low-sugar, non-artificial, GMO elimination diet. Items used on-site are eco-friendly and PVC/BPA free.

Management and ownership of Frontier Childcare has remained consistent. This includes director Ms. Huxford. Ms. Huxford is organized, and in turn, the program operates smoothly. Management has systems of organization in place to help ensure administrative items are completed and maintained as required. Since the last monitoring visit, Frontier Childcare has retained numerous seasoned staff who reported celebrating 30 years, 28 years, 20 years, and 4 years of employment with Frontier childcare. During the monitoring visit, several staff talked favorably about their employment at Frontier Childcare. Center chef discussed celebrating 15 years with Frontier Childcare and having the privilege of preparing and serving culinary delights to children for 6 of these years. On the day of the monitoring visit, lunch included homemade broccoli cheese soup, pretzel sticks, fresh watermelon, fresh bananas and milk.

There is a solid partnership between the Frontier childcare and the Frontier Co-Op. The childcare team is often included in company-wide planning, functions and celebrations (e.g. summer party). Building and grounds are well-maintained. Frontier administration help ensure the property is sanitary and hazard free each day. Staff do the day-to-day cleaning and maintenance. However, Frontier has a maintenance department and cleaning crew that assists with the more difficult endeavors. Center kitchen is well-organized, well-maintained, and sanitary. Classrooms continue to be arranged in a thoughtful manner with learning at the forefront. Frontier Childcare curriculum includes a combination of learning strategies incorporating teacher-created ideas, phonics work, math concepts, small and large gross motor, imaginative play experiences, and crafts. Curriculum also incorporates off-site field trip experiences, on-site guest speaker events, themed days, nature projects, and holiday/seasonal parties. Management discussed how summer 2025 programming is already being planned to include trips to local parks!

Frontier Childcare continues efforts at optimal communication between the program/staff and families. The program has organized parent-staff/program information centers, offers regular program newsletters, utilizes technological communication resources, and supports family programming activities.

Frontier Childcare collaborates well with many community partners including CCR&R, health professionals, local transitional housing program (e.g. field trip transportation), Norway American Legion, and several local businesses. Frontier works closely with the local school district to allow a smooth transition (including school bus transportation) of children to and from childcare for preschool and school-age programming.

Frontier Childcare has emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. The program has successfully navigated through Benton County flooding events, the 2019 winter Polar Vortex, 2019 health (covid-19) pandemic, 8/10/20 Derecho Storm, 2021 food supply issues, 2022 infant formula shortages, 2023 air quality alerts and 7/19/24 global technology outage.

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 hand washing, diapering, cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing. Cleaning supplies as well as cleaning reminders were observed on-site.

On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were nurturing and attentive to the children's needs. Activities observed were many (e.g. infant cares, center play, indoor large gross motor). Children have access to an array of materials (e.g. books, imaginative play options, building materials, games, puzzles, sensory, crafts) that encouraged innovative play. Staff provided a companionable presence allowing children to have many choices in their play experiences. Routine transitions (e.g. clean up activities, lunch time rituals) worked smoothly into the program's welcoming and cooperative play environment. Throughout the classrooms, staff were overheard providing children with meaningful discussion, positive redirection when needed and encouraging the use of social graces. Children responded well to staff and appeared to be truly enjoying their day.

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

None noted.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Licensing supports this spring's future goal of outdoor playground improvements including replacing pea gravel cushion surfacing with poured cushion surfacing as well as replacing the wooden fence.

Discontinue the use of unattached, training toilet seats as these are a sanitation issue. In any restroom needing a modification, please consider installing a standard toilet seat with attached, built-in toddler seat (e.g. toddler restroom).

In toddler 2 room, please install an electrical outlet in a child friendly area that does not create a cord hazard.

A full license is issued. 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.