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

Name of Center: Stratford Early Learning Center **Enrollment:** 49 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 16109

Street: 1000 Shakespeare AVE **City:** Stratford Iowa **Zip** 50249 **County:** Hamilton

Mailing Address: PO Box 190, Stratford, IA, 50249

Director's Name: Chloe Ament **Phone Number:** 515-838-2204

On-Site Supervisor(s): Jenna Mathes **E-Mail:** cbergman@stratford.k12.ia.us

Date(s) of Visit: 06-19-2023

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

LICENSING VISITS

New Application X **Re-Application** **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: 05-26-2023

Comments :

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

Financial Type: Profit X 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	12	8	20	20	60
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 08-01-2023 to 08-01-2025
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Raymond Salsbury **Date:** 07-05-2023

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

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

An unannounced annual visit was made to the Stratford Early Learning Center on 06-19-23 where I met with the center director Chloe Ament. Chloe became the director of this program in November 2022 and is well qualified for the position with a Bachelors degree and Teaching Certificate in Agriculture and Life Science Education. Chloe also has prior experience in teaching at the high school level, and experience working in early childhood care. The program is owned and overseen by the school and has offered a preschool wrap around program that operates in the school building during the school year. The program serves infants through school age children. There are approximately 49 children enrolled though not all attend at any given time and the numbers reflect the open nature of the after school program that is available. There are 10 employees in the main daycare program. All aspects of the program were reviewed during this visit with the exception of the preschool wrap around program which was not in session.

The general design and layout of the center and classrooms remains the same as in prior reports. The center has 3 distinct classrooms with one room for infants, toddlers, and the preschool/school age children. The center also has a larger open central area that is used for meal service and provides additional space for the school age and preschool children. It is noted that the space used for the after school program is located in the school cafeteria where more room could be utilized if needed. Each classroom was observed to be in good repair with only a few minor issues related to maintenance such as paint and drywall damage but nothing that rose to the level of being an immediate safety concern. Each classroom has direct secondary egress to the outdoors. All exits were clear of obstruction and opened easily and freely. The infant room does make use of evacuation cribs which were also maintained clear of obstruction. The center makes use of an interior bathroom for emergency tornado shelter and the items that had previously been stored in that space have been removed. Each classroom has windows along the exterior walls that provide ample natural light, a view of the outdoors, and ventilation. Each room has elevated changing stations. While the required changing procedures posting was present in each classroom the location of the changing station of the infant room was moved and the posting should be re-hung by that station. Toilets are located off a corridor from the main commons area. Each classroom has sinks available in the classroom space to facilitate hand washing.

The layout of each room is generally open with activity centers created through the placement of shelves, furniture, and play structures. The arrangement was such that it did not create any blind areas. The infant room does make use of a mobile fence structure to separate the cribs and sleeping area from the main programming space. While it does not have an easily operated gate the staff were observed to move one end of the structure when accessing that area rather than stepping over the fence. Each room had a good variety of toys and materials that were observed to be in good repair and generally appropriate to the ages of the children present though there were a couple toys with small parts identified in the infant room which should be moved to a classroom with children 3 years of age or older. Each classroom had a copy of the daily schedule and while there is a planned curriculum it was not posted. Despite having a planned schedule and curriculum much of the activities observed did not relate to either with children spending much of their day engaged in self-directed outdoor play. This was further combined with a general supervision approach that was more observational than engaged. While there were no behavioral issues observed during the visit it was noted that the stimulation and energy levels were escalating especially when the children did return to the building for lunch. This approach also tends to result in children engaging in behaviors that are inappropriate resulting in a more reactive and consequence based behavior management

system. These issues and recommendations were discussed with Chloe. Ratio was maintained in the center as required by age.

Good health and safety policies were generally observed during the visit. I was able to observe a diaper change while at the center and the required procedures were followed. Good storage practices were in place with regard to both prescription and over the counter medications however not all over the counter medications were labeled with the name of the individual to whom it belonged. Good storage practices were also observed for chemical cleaners, first aid kits, and personal items that may contain materials that could be a safety risk to children. The center has a first aid kit that contains materials necessary to address most common first aid needs. Good cleaning procedures were observed during the time of my visit with staff waiting for the children to be out of the immediate area before using cleaning products. Good safe sleep practices were observed for infants under 1 year of age. Good hand washing practices were generally observed but it was noted that the location of the restrooms and hand washing sinks are not within the direct line of staff for a majority of the building unless staff are conscientious about where they position themselves. This was reviewed with Chloe given that some children did not wash their hands in an effective manner, and other children were observed to be playing in the bathrooms until staff arrived to redirect them.

Meals are generally prepared by the school and transported to the center in hot/cold holding containers during the school year. During the summer the program does it's own meal preparation. The center does have a small kitchen area where meals are prepared. A menu is posted and the meal served on the day of my visit was consistent with the planned menu. While the staff did not eat with the children supervision was provided at the table. Meals were pre-portioned for the children and good food handling practices were observed with the staff wearing food service gloves, and used measured scoops to ensure each child received a full portion. Good food storage practices were observed. The kitchen was clean with no evidence of insect or rodent infestation.

The center has a small toddler playground, and also makes use of the school playground. Wood chips are used for fall surfacing in both areas where there are climbing structures and a good depth of material was present. The equipment was generally in good repair though some items were nearing the end of their useful life. One homemade music structure consisting of a wooden frame and different sizes of PVC tubing was damaged and had screws protruding and needs to be removed or repaired. Both playgrounds are enclosed by fencing and a fence also separates the two playgrounds. Large mature trees provide shade on both playgrounds.

In reviewing administrative records all required notices were posted in an area that was readily visible and accessible to parents and visitors. A random selection of child files were reviewed and compared to the self-audit completed by the center which was found to be accurate. The files were generally found to contain all required information though all except those that would have enrolled in the last year needed an annual update. Chloe stated that the center does plan to implement the use of a new electronic communication application, Playground, and will have all families update all records in August when that system is initiated. In reviewing staff files a random sample selection again found the self-audit to be accurate and identified that 1 file did need an initial physical. The required inspection logs and certificates for Radon and Monthly playground inspections were available and current. The Fuel Burning Appliances inspection could not be found on the day of my visit and as a reminder all fuel burning appliances must be inspected annually to ensure that they are free of gas and carbon monoxide leaks. Fire and tornado drill logs had not been completed for January, February or March of 2023 as Chole stated she was not aware that they were required each month until April when she began doing them.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The center did have a significant change with staffing including Chloe taking over as the director. Chole has been very focused on organizing the center and identifying the aspects she wants to make improvements to including record maintenance, and curriculum development. Chloe identified that she does have a very strong group of core teachers.

The center will begin using a new electronic communication application to help maintain records, and communication with parents.

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

109.9(1)d: All files contain a pre-employment physical exam report completed within six months prior to hire and at least every three years. Physical exams shall be documented on form 470-5152, Child Care Provider Physical Examination Report.
-- Number not in compliance: 1

109.9(2): All files are updated at least annually and when a change occurs.
-- All files for children not enrolled in the last year needed an annual update.

109.11(3)a: Center shall ensure that: Facility and premises are sanitary, safe, and hazard free. Adequate indoor and outdoor space is provided. The outdoor area shall include safe play equipment and area of shade. Sufficient space provided for dining. Sufficient lighting shall be provided. Sufficient ventilation. Sufficient heating. sufficient cooling. Sufficient bathroom and diapering facilities. Equipment, including kitchen appliances, are maintained so as not to result in burns, shock, or injury to children. Sanitation and safety procedures for the center are developed and implemented to reduce risk or injury or harm to children and reduce transmission of disease.
-- The damaged PVC music structure of the playground needs to be repaired or removed.

109.11(7)c: All centers: Annual inspection prior to heating season of all fuel-burning appliances to reduce risk of carbon monoxide poisoning and shall install one carbon monoxide detector on each floor that conforms to UL Standard 2034.
-- Documentation could not be found on the day of the visit.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

A full license is recommended at this time. Please provide a written response to the licensing consultant identifying a plan of action to correct and maintain those aspects cited as not meeting licensing standards and identifying an anticipated date of compliance. At least one visit will be made to the center during the next year.

*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.