Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Families First Child Care and Learning Center

Provider No.: 51155

Address: 1661 3rd St SW, Waverly, IA, 50677

County: Bremer

Director's Name: Kennedy Kaiser

On-Site Supervisor: Wendy Buchmann

Phone Number: 3195592450

E-Mail: familiesfirstiowa@gmail.com

HHS Visit Date: 07/20/2026

Licensing Period: 08/01/2025 to 08/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 05/16/2024

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

- [ ] PTO
- [ ] Licensing Visit
- [ ] Drop In
- [X] 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	6:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Tuesday	6:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Wednesday	6:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Thursday	6:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Friday	6:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

- [X] Infant(0-<24 Months)
- [X] Toddler
- [X] PreSchool
- [X] School Age
- [ ] All Ages

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	24	16	40	25	105
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

On 07/20/26 I made an unannounced off year licensing visit to Families First Child Care and Learning Center in Waverly. Beth and Ken Burrow are the owners of the center but they have moved to Des Moines. Mr. Burrow still handles the center's finances and visits the program approximately once each month. Mary Jo and David Carlson were the interim directors of the center and they stayed on to help with administrative duties. They have owned and operated several childcare centers in Minnesota. They have a wealth of knowledge regarding childcare. Kaylie Yanda is the director but she is not present at the center often. Ms. Yanda started with the program in April 2025. She has a BA in Grade 3 Inclusion/AAS in early childhood. Wendy Buchman is the on-site supervisor. Ms. Buchman has a degree in special education and has been employed in childcare for almost twenty years. She is the lead teacher in the PreK room. Kennedy Kaiser is the staffing supervisor and she makes the staff schedule every week. The plan is to make Ms. Kaiser the director when she returns from maternity leave. There are 38 staff members employed by the program.

The program operates out of a free-standing building. The program was given permission to open on 04/06/21. The center operates Monday through Friday from 6:00 am until 6:00 pm. It serves infants through school-aged children. There are currently 101 children enrolled. There are resources for parents inside the entrance. The center partners with Taylor Physical Therapy to provide services to children with identified needs. They also work with Central Rivers AEA and Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R).

The center operates out of the following rooms: Infant 1 room (up to 8-9 months old and crawling), Infant 2 room (8-9 months until approximately 14 months old), toddlers (14-24 months), two-year-old room, four and five-year-old room and three year old and school age room. An inspection of each room was completed. Windows provide natural lighting in all the classrooms except for the space in the middle of the center. The rooms are decorated with pictures of the children, the

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children's art projects, and posters to assist the children with the learning process, such as the alphabet, shapes, colors and numbers. The children's birthdays are posted. There is an area for circle time in the classrooms.

The centers observed on the day of the licensing visit include library, blocks, table toys, games, puzzles, transportation, Play-Doh, puppets, art, dramatic play, writing, math, science/discovery, sensory table and music. Centers were arranged in a manner that allowed easy movement between activities, but it also allowed for clear supervision by staff members. Materials are in good condition. The materials are located at child level, so they are easily accessible to the children.

The center offers a three and four-year-old preschool class that operates Monday through Friday from 9:00 am until 11:30 am during the school year.

The center uses ABC Jesus Loves Me during the school year to develop lesson plans. This curriculum addresses math, literacy, sensory, art small and gross motor activities. They are using the Vacation Bible School Curriculum, Road Trip, for the summer. This is a summer camp type of curriculum. Teachers prepare their own lesson plans. Activities are based on weekly themes. Lesson plans were available for review in each room.

There was a phone with emergency numbers and the center's address and phone number in the school age space and in the office. Emergency numbers were posted in every room. Rooms communicate with one another with walkie talkies. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and evacuation diagrams were posted by the main program doors and outdoor exits throughout the center. A daily schedule was posted in each room.

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. I reviewed documentation of monthly playground inspections. The radon test was completed in April 2024 and must be repeated in five years. Results were within EPA guidelines. A fuel burning inspection was completed and no concerns were noted. Carbon monoxide detectors are present in the fire alarm system located on the ceiling in each room. Outlets were protected. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 05/16/24.

The center uses the Brightwheel app to complete daily sheets for the children under the age of two. All the rooms use the app to communicate with the families. Staff members can send the parents pictures and parents receive information in real time. Parents can access the lesson plans through Brightwheel.

The center does not participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) but does follow the guidelines. Karla Friedrich is the current cook, but Kaitlynn Jepsen will be the cook come August. The program provides breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. Meals and snacks are prepared on site. They have use of an air fryer, crock pots, roaster and instant pot. The center uses a four-week rotation of menus. Menus are posted on the Brightwheel app for parents and they are posted in the entrance. The children are served their food by staff members.

The kitchen was observed to be clean and organized. There are an industrial refrigerator and freezer, and thermometers were present. There are two dishwashing sinks and an industrial dishwasher. All dishes are returned to the kitchen to be cleaned and sanitized. Disposable products are also used. Food items were stored according to NHSPS guidelines.

Parents provide everything for the infants until they start table food. Bottles are made in the classrooms and cleaned and sanitized in the room. There is a refrigerator in the Infant 1 room and Infant 2 room. There were thermometers present.

Bleach is being used to sanitize the food tables and disinfect the changing tables. I observed the teacher prepare the tables for snacks and proper procedures are followed.

I observed and discussed diaper changing procedures in rooms and proper procedures are followed.

There are several sinks and diaper changing tables throughout the center. Handwashing and diaper changing procedures were posted in all locations.

The parent information is located on a bulletin board inside the entrance. The mandatory reporter, childcare consultant and the handbook availability were posted. The license was conspicuously hung. A no-smoking sign was posted at the entrance.

The program has two fenced-in playground areas. The area on the east side of the center is for children under the age of

three. There is turf for fall surfacing. There is a small piece of climbing equipment, a slide, a caterpillar tunnel, riding toys and a playhouse. There are two tarps for shade. There is also a grassy area. There is a bench for the children to rest.

On the north side of the center is the playground for children three-years-old and older. There is a grassy area and an area with climbing equipment where rubber mulch is used for fall surfacing. There is a teeter totter airplane for the children to play on. There is also a web climber for the children. There is a bench for the children to rest and a tarp provides shade. There is also a concrete area.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

I observed a lot of enthusiasm from staff members while interacting with the children. They appeared to truly enjoy their jobs and their time with the children. They were observed reading to children, doing a craft with children, singing and dancing with children. They interacted with the children at their level. They sat on the floor actively engaged in activities and when they were standing, they would bend over to talk with the children face to face. Staff members provided the children with clear and easy to understand directions. They used repetition to teach. Staff members had great teamwork and communication. Assistants in the rooms knew what to do without the lead teacher needing to say anything. I observed staff members assist with handwashing. They were patient and provided the children with praise. Positive redirection is used when necessary. Child friendly music was playing in classrooms.

This summer the center is using the Vacation Bible School Curriculum, Road Trip. They will do this for ten weeks. I observed the children aged two and older gather in the middle room of the center. One staff member told a Bible story. She asked the children questions during the story and staff members held children on their laps. Then the children sang and danced as a staff member played guitar. One staff member was using a puppet during the singing and dancing. Fun videos were playing for the children. There was a lot of enthusiasm among the staff members and the children. It was enjoyable to watch.

There are “Meet the Teacher” posters in the entrance of the center.

Ms. Carlson states they have the best group of staff members they have had. I observed a great, engaged group of staff members.

Mr. and Mrs. Carlson are amazing to work with. They are committed to the center, the families who attend and the staff members who work there. They reside in Minnesota and stay in Waverly to make sure administrative needs are met at the center.

Mr. and Mrs. Carlson state they think of the center as a family. All the children know the other children and the families get to know one another and they have play dates outside of the center. The environment feels like family and they are welcoming. They state it is fun to see relationships built between families.

Ms. Carlson states they have a parade in their parking lot for the Fourth of July and for Halloween. Community businesses participate and they have family spectators. The businesses and others in the community hand out “goodies” to the children as they parade through the parking lot. Ms. Carlson showed me pictures of the event. Parents then stay and the children eat a sack lunch with them.

Ms. Carlson states they had a picnic day this summer. They put a big tent up and they had sack lunches and they had 90% participation from families. She states it was also entrepreneur’s week and the children learned how to make lemonade and they sold it with cookies after the picnic.

They have great community support.

The center is active on social media. They have a Facebook and Instagram account. They also have a website.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

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

N/A

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

A full license is issued for the remainder of the licensing period. All HHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period.

Targeted Assessment: Behavior Management:
I discussed with Mr. and Mrs. Carlson their oversight of behavior management related to helping childcare staff: 1) Understand expectations, 2) managing frustrations, 3) monitor performance. Ms. Carlson states they must be creative. They tell staff members not to let themselves get to the point where you want to grab a child. Let administration know and call for help in the room or bring them to the office. They state the children want to know where the boundary is and they feel more secure knowing where the line is. They tell staff members not to get to the escalated point. It is okay to ask for help from the office or from one another. Mr. Carlson states if they feel overwhelmed or if they see someone else get overwhelmed, allow them to take a break and cover for one another.

To monitor the situation, they are in the rooms frequently and moving between rooms frequently. They will ask teachers how things are going and they will stay in rooms if they need help. Staff members know they can ask for help and they will cover. They want staff members to feel like they are family and they work hard to keep that.

An administrative change is being made to name Kennedy Kaiser as the center's new director. She has been employed as an office manager and worked at the center for 3 years. She started in September 2026.

Date: 09/27/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Becky Frost

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**.