Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Bear Care

Provider No.: 46329

Address: 808 E Lucas ST, Algona, IA, 50511

County: Kossuth

Director's Name: Sara Casey

On-Site Supervisor:

Phone Number: 5152953509

E-Mail: caseys@bishopgarrigan.org

HHS Visit Date: 01/26/2026

Licensing Period: 02/01/2026 to 02/01/2028

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 02/26/2024

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

- [ ] PTO
- [X] Licensing Visit
- [ ] Drop In
- [ ] 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	6:30 AM to 5:30 PM		
Tuesday	6:30 AM to 5:30 PM		
Wednesday	6:30 AM to 5:30 PM		
Thursday	6:30 AM to 5:30 PM		
Friday	6:30 AM to 5:30 PM		
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	29	17	47	15	108
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

An unannounced annual visit was made to the Bear Care center on 01-26-26 where I met with center director Sara Casey. Sara is well qualified for the position based on her experience, and training. The program is located in the Bishop Garrigan Catholic school in Algona and is overseen by the Archdiocese of Sioux City. The center provides daycare and preschool programming for infants and preschool age children, a formal 3 year old preschool program, and after school and summer programming for school age children. There are approximately 80 children enrolled in the center between the various programs served by 25 staff. All aspects of the program subject to licensing standards were reviewed during the visit.

The general layout, design, and operation of the program and buildings remains the same as in the prior visits. The program has a campus arrangement using various classrooms of the school building for older children, and the young infant care (birth - 12 months) in a renovated residential home that is on the same property as the school building. The layout of the school building rooms has a large room that is divided into two rooms by a pass-through work area and a small hallway with older infants on one side, and 3 year old children on the other. There are two classrooms on either side that are connected by doorways with 2 year old children in one, and the formal 3 year old preschool in the other. Each of the classrooms in the school building have windows located along the exterior walls which provide ample natural light, a view of the outdoors, ventilation, and secondary emergency egress. The older infant room also has a secondary emergency exit providing direct egress to the outdoors. A large archway opening connects the infant room to the 2 year old classroom but a barrier is in place to prevent intrusion by the older children. Each room was observed to be clean and arranged so as not to create any blind areas. Bathrooms are located off the main hallway with separate facilities for boys and girls though an additional bathroom is located directly across the hall from the 3 year old daycare room. The infant spaces and the 2 year old rooms have changing stations, and additional sinks in them to facilitate hand washing.

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The young infant space as noted is a renovated residential building. All programming occurs on the main floor though there is a full basement which is used for an emergency storm shelter. The layout has a main area that would have served as a living/dining room space with two alcove rooms off that space which are used for cribs and sleeping areas. Both are accessed via large archway openings and are visible from the main programming room. A changing station is located in what would be considered a back bedroom. A full bathroom is present where the infants hands can be washed. During the visit the water temperature was measured to still be in excess of 140 deg F and it was reviewed that this needs to be adjusted immediately so that the temperature does not exceed 120 deg F at the spigot. The building has windows along the exterior walls in all rooms. There are several exits including one that was installed with a ramp to provide at grade egress for use with evacuation cribs. The programming rooms were observed to be clean.

The program does intend to begin substantial renovations in the spring. This will include tearing down the Infant House, and construction of a new wing to the school. When that work beings the younger infants will move to the space on the other side of the room housing the older infants, and 3 year old children with the pass through changing station and kitchenette area.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

Good interactions were observed throughout the visit with all staff being actively engaged with the children either attending to their needs or implementing specific curriculum activities. This included presenting the planned schedule and curriculum with children rotating use of the gymnasium, doing craft activities, and teacher lead activities. Each teacher presented a positive and energetic attitude when interacting with the children. When speaking each teacher used calm tones and positive word choices. This positive interactive approach paired with proactive behavior management techniques of routines, reminders, and positive recognition resulted in there being no significant behavioral concerns and those minor issues that did arise were easily addressed through simple redirection. Ratio was maintained in each classroom as required by age with at least 2 staff present in each room. Supervision was maintained for children including during the visit children in the 3 year old classroom were observed to be sent across the hall from the room to use the restroom. At times when there was only one teacher available in the classroom she would stand in a position to provide supervision to the children in the classroom as well as ensuring the child went to the restroom and returned. When there was a second teacher present one would escort children to the restroom as needed.

While the center does have established health and safety policies some practices do need to be reviewed. During the visit I was able to observe a diaper change. The teacher performing the diaper change did not deglove between handling soiled and clean items, and did not disinfect the changing station following the diapering, nor was she observed to clean it prior to changing the child. Good cleaning practices were observed with the teachers sanitizing table surfaces before and after meal/snack service, including prior to serving additional children who arrived after other children had finished breakfast. It was observed that while classrooms followed good practices with ensuring that chemical cleaners, medications, personal items, and other items that could present a safety risk to children were stored where they were not acceptable others did not. Response plans for children with identified health concerns were maintained for those children in the classrooms. Good safe sleep practices were observed for children under 1 year of age. Cots and cribs with appropriate bedding were provided for all children that nap. Good handwashing practices were observed for both staff and children.

Meals are prepared by the school cafeteria and a menu of planned meals and snacks is posted. A limited supply of snack crackers and other items are stored in cabinets and refrigerators in some of the classroom areas. Good food storage and handling practices were observed during the visit. Breakfast was served during the time of my visit and good food service practices were observed. Some staff wore food service gloves and others did not but those staff did wash their hands each time before serving a child if having attended to other tasks. Meals were pre-portioned for the children with the teachers using measured scoops to ensure that each child received a full serving. The teachers did not eat with the children but did provide supervision at the tables during the meals. Meals were served in the classrooms.

The playground is located between the school and the infant house and is fully enclosed by fencing and maintained by the school. The playground was not fully reviewed during this visit due to weather conditions and snow cover. In addition as noted there are plans for renovations to the physical facilities which will include removal of the current outdoor playground equipment and space in the spring.

In reviewing administrative records all required notices for No Smoking, Consultant Contact, License Certificate, and Mandatory Abuse Reporting were posted and readily visible to all parents and visitors in both locations. Other required

postings for emergency evacuation, emergency contacts, disease notification, diapering, handwashing, daily schedule, curriculum plan, and menu were also present. The center uses a self-audit system to track information in child and staff files. A random sample of both child and staff files were selected for review and compared to the self-audits which were found to be accurate. Based on the review and self-audits all staff and child files were in substantial compliance for all required documentation with 2 children needing an updated physical. In reviewing staff files several staff had Iowa SING background checks, and 1st Aid/CPR which were conducted as a group processing and which had recently expired. All inspection logs and certificates were available and current. The center Parent Handbook was reviewed and several required policies had not been included in the most recent update.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

The center Parent Handbook was reviewed and several required written polices were not present. This included, Field Trips/Off Site Activities, Transportation, Discipline, Incident Reporting, Curriculum, Staff Orientation, Staff Training, Access for individuals required to register as sex offenders, and Emergency plans. While it is acceptable that the center may have some of these policies present in other handbooks or postings notice should be included in the Parent Handbook informing them of where that information can be found if parents wish to review the information.

Daily infant reports are required for all children under 24 months of age and must include documentation of Feeding, Elimination/Diapering, Sleeping, Disposition, and Activities.

Documentation of fire and tornado drills could not be located at the time of the visit. It was reported that they were conducted, but that the co-director who had recently departed the center had been responsible for maintaining that information.

Chemical cleaners were left where they were accessible to infants in the older infant room. Toys and items with small parts that could be a choking hazard were present in classrooms serving children under 3 years of age and need to be removed.

The temperature of the hot water of the Infant House location was measured to exceed 140 deg. F when measured at the spigot with only the hot water tap turned on. Temperatures for hand washing sinks shall not exceed 120 deg. F.

Required diapering procedures were reviewed with the staff that was changing diapers. Sara stated that this would be reviewed with all staff.

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

Information identifying all required written policies including guidance on development was provided to the center.

The center is using an electronic communication application which has the functionality to track all required elements but staff were not documenting Disposition or Activities. It was reviewed that the application includes the ability to attach photographs of children to their daily record and use of photographs as a visual depiction of activity and disposition is acceptable but would require a separate photo for each child every day and should include morning and afternoon to show any changes in functioning.

It was reviewed that if documentation of past fire and tornado drills could not be located that a new record would need to be started and maintained.

Staff moved the chemical cleaners, and began removing toys which could present a choking hazard during the time of the visit.

Photo confirmation of correction was received via email on 02-03-26 that the temperature had been reduced to less than 120 deg. F.

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

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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.

Date: 02/04/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Ray Salsbury

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**.