Health and Human Services

# Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

## CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Bright Start Daycare and Preschool

Provider No.: 29959

Address: 1003 Okey ST, Hull, IA, 51239

County: Sioux

Director's Name: Kristen Niemeyer

On-Site Supervisor: Kelsi Vanleeuwen

Phone Number: 7124391683

E-Mail: brightstart1683@gmail.com

HHS Visit Date: 08/05/2026

Licensing Period: 08/01/2026 to 08/01/2028

**Fire Inspection:**

Date Inspected: 02/13/2024

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

## CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

| 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 | 32 | 17 | 35 | 23 | 107 |
| Summer | | | | | 0 |

**1. Basic Overview**

I completed an unannounced licensing visit on August 05, 2026. I met with Kelsi Van Leeuwen, the onsite supervisor. Director Kristen Niemeyer is currently on maternity leave. Kristen Niemeyer holds a bachelor's degree and has six years of experience working with children in a childcare center. Kelsi has fifteen years of experience in childcare. The center includes seven classrooms and an atrium play area, giving the program a licensed capacity of 107 children. The center operates Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Classroom groupings include three infant rooms (ages 6 weeks–9 months, 9–18 months, and 18–24 months), a 2–3-year-old room, a 3–4-year-old room, and a school-age room serving children ages 4–7. The center has a secured access.

All areas of the program were observed, including classroom environments and activities, nutritional practices, health and safety procedures, playground safety, transportation and field trip practices, and an administrative review.

The childcare facility provides a warm, inviting, and stimulating environment. Classrooms and common areas receive ample natural lighting, contributing to a positive atmosphere. A standout feature is the creatively designed atrium play space, which includes a tree-themed reading nook that promotes literacy and imaginative play. Learning spaces are enriched with numerous visual aids such as alphabet charts, numbers, shapes, sight words, and displays of children's artwork. Family photographs are prominently displayed throughout the center, helping foster emotional security and a strong home-school connection. The center currently uses a themed curriculum focused on learning through play. They are also developing a new curriculum with structured lesson plans in collaboration with a licensed teacher who serves on the board.

The center maintains a strong commitment to cleanliness and safety. Toys are cleaned daily, and both staff and children follow proper handwashing procedures. Medication is stored securely in a locked box. Staff members were able to clearly

explain appropriate diapering procedures in the infant rooms, and staff were observed engaging with children at their level and providing appropriate support.

Monthly fire and tornado drills are documented appropriately. Radon testing has been completed, and results are within the normal range. Furnace inspections have also been completed to ensure safety. The center follows CACFP nutritional guidelines, with nutritious meals and snacks prepared on site. Proper food storage practices were observed, and refrigerators were clean and maintained at appropriate temperatures.

The center features a large, fenced playground adjacent to the building. The area includes swings, a sandbox, a playhouse, slides, and climbing equipment. Pea gravel is used as safety surfacing, and shaded areas are available to protect children during outdoor play. Local schools drop off children after school, helping ensure continuity of care for school-age children.

The center has interior windows from the large atrium that look directly into the classrooms, which is a thoughtful and beneficial design feature. Several children excitedly pointed out siblings in other classrooms through these windows, demonstrating how this visibility provides comfort and reassurance. This layout supports a sense of connection among siblings and contributes to a secure, family-centered environment.

I observed strong staff engagement, with employees interacting positively at children's level—either seated on the floor playing or actively participating in planned activities. Staff used smooth transitions between activities, helping children move from play to clean-up or from classroom to playground without confusion or disruptions. Teachers provided clear, consistent expectations, using simple directions and visual cues so children knew what to do next.

Their goal is to become IQ4K certified.

**2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program**

The center receives strong community support. Recently, a local BBQ competition selected the center as the beneficiary of its fundraising efforts and donated the proceeds. This type of community involvement demonstrates the positive relationships the center has built and reinforces the community's commitment to supporting the children and families they serve.

In speaking with the director, it is clear that staff are deeply dedicated to the children in their care. Because many staff members know the families personally and are part of the same small community, they are attentive to signs of stress and work proactively to support families when needed. This close community connection strengthens relationships, enhances communication, and contributes to a nurturing, responsive environment for the children.

They are open to beginning work on IQ4K, which will support their ongoing quality improvement efforts by helping them strengthen professional development, enhance classroom practices, and further align their program with Iowa's state quality standards.

**3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard**

109.7(2): Center directors and all staff have the required contact hours of training.

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

**5. Special Notes/Recommendations**

Targeted Assessment: Behavior Management
I discussed with Kelsey regarding their oversight of behavior management related to helping childcare staff: 1) Understand expectations, 2) managing frustrations, 3) monitor performance.

## CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Staff have a clear understanding of expectations regarding their interactions with children and the importance of providing active supervision. They have completed training on responding to difficult behaviors, which supports consistent, developmentally appropriate guidance in the classrooms. Kelsi and Kristen frequently visit classrooms to model appropriate staff-child interactions and to support staff when needed. Because the center is small and closely connected, they are often able to hear or observe when a classroom is experiencing increased stress and respond promptly. Staff also utilize a Google Chat system to request assistance, ensuring quick communication across the center. I followed up with staff, who confirmed that they feel comfortable asking for help when needed. Additionally, the center has cameras in each classroom, which supervisors use to monitor staff engagement and ensure ongoing support and accountability.

Director needs to email consultant by 10/31/26 confirming that items that are below standards are corrected.

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: 08/06/2026

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**.