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

Name of Center: Early Beginnings Inc **Enrollment:** 33 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 24212

Street: 98 3rd AVE **City:** Van Horne Iowa **Zip** 52346 **County:** Benton

Mailing Address: 98 3rd AVE, Van Horne, IA, 52346

Director's Name: Bree Hepker **Phone Number:** 319-228-8808

On-Site Supervisor(s): Mallory Albers **E-Mail:** rainearly@aol.com

Date(s) of Visit: 03-10-2025

X **Licensing Visit** X **Unannounced Visit** X **Off Year Visit** X **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	8	11	12	10	41
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 03-01-2024 to 03-01-2026
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons **Date:** 08-22-2025

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

Not applicable.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

On 02/13/23 I made an unannounced off year licensing visit to Early Beginnings Inc. in Van Horne. I met with Bree Hepker, the director and owner. Ms. Hepker has an BA in early childhood education. She opened this center in 2000. Mallory Albers is the on-site supervisor. She started at the center in March 2008. She is working toward her AA in early childhood through the TEACH program and will graduate in December 2022. The center employs six staff members total.

The center operates out of a free-standing building. The program operates 6:45 am until 5:45 pm Monday through Friday and serves infants through school-aged children. There are currently 33 children enrolled.

The program operates out of three rooms: infants (birth until 18 months), a room for children 18 months through two-years-old and a room for children three and older. An inspection of each room was completed. Windows provide natural lighting. The rooms are decorated with the children's art projects, and posters to assist the children

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

Ms. Hepker states she has been the owner and childcare provider for over 22 years. Ms. Hepker owns two childcare centers. Early Beginnings Inc in Van Horne and Early Beginnings Atkins Inc.

Ms. Hepker states they have students come over from the high school child development 1 and 2 classes the first and second quarters of school to interact with the children. The children love the interaction.

Ms. Hepker states she has great staff longevity.

Ms. Hepker states they started using Brightwheel through the Shared Services grant. They had been using Brightwheel but they are now using it for billing and to sign in and out.

Ms. Hepker states they are getting a new playground using grant funds.

Ms. Hepker states they have a close partnership with Benton County Empowerment. They pay $25 per hour for staff members to take trainings, such as Essentials, Passport, medication administration, Early Learning Standards, first-aid, CPR, universal precautions and mandatory reporting. She is in talk with them to cover

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

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.
Secure the electrical cords near the windows in the dining area so that the children do not have access to them. Bottles are washed in the infant room. They are currently not sanitizing the bottles. Bottles must be washed and sanitized. You can use the three-step method in the room or put them through the dishwasher.

109.12(1): Program structure that uses developmentally appropriate practices and written program of activities planned to the developmental needs of children served. Program complements but does not duplicate school curriculum. Schedule of program is posted in a place visible to parents.
Lesson plans were not available for review in two of the rooms.

109.12(5)b: Infants diapered in a sanitary manner as needed in central diapering area. One changing table for every 15 infants/toddlers needing diaper changes. Diapering, sanitation, and handwashing procedures posted and implemented in central diapering area. Additional concerns: I discussed the diaper changing procedures with the infant room staff member. She is leaving gloves on through the entire diaper changing process. Gloves are considered soiled, and they must be removed prior to putting on the new diaper and dressing the child. She did correct this when she conducted a diaper change. Additionally, she sprayed the disinfectant on the changing table, but she did not clean it with soap and water first. The table must always be cleaned with soap and water prior to.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

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

An administrative change is being made to name Mallory Albers as an on-site supervisor. She was approved by Amy Lyons, licensing consultant, but the change was not made in the system.

This report is noting an administrative change. Ransom and Crew - 52521 commenced operations on 5/2/2024 at this location and closed end of day 8/22/2025. Prior to Ransom and Crew - 52521 opening, Early Beginnings Inc - 24212 had been operating at this location. Owner of the building Bree Hepker has remained consistent throughout the changes. Since Ransom and Crew -52521 closed, Early Beginnings Inc - 24212 has resumed operations effective 8/23/2025. Bree Hepker is also owner of Early Beginnings Inc - 24212. A 2025 annual visit was conducted at this location on 3/10/2025.

*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.