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

Name of Center: Creative Kids Company - Vinton **Enrollment:** 77 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 52511

Street: 308 E 13th Street **City:** Vinton Iowa **Zip** 52349 **County:** Benton

Mailing Address: 203 Cottage ST, Shellsburg, IA, 52332

Director's Name: Meredith Zuspann & Kelsey Fish **Phone Number:** 319-436-5877

On-Site Supervisor(s): Holli Lewis & Mindy Kies **E-Mail:** creative.kids.vs@gmail.com

Date(s) of Visit: 06-12-2025

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: 12-23-2024

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: Infants (0-23 mo.) 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*	*Summary Only*

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General					0
Summer	0	0	46	37	83

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 06-03-2024 to 08-01-2026
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Becky Frost **Date:** 07-29-2025

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

N/A

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

On 06/12/25 I made an unannounced off year licensing visit to Creative Kids Company in Vinton. I met with Meredith Zuspann, a co-director. Kelsey Fish is also a co-director and was present on the day of my visit. Ms. Zuspann has a BA in education for K-8 and an MA in teaching and reading. She was employed as an elementary teacher since August 2009 until she purchased Creative Kids Company. Ms. Fish has a BA in elementary education and an MA in educational leadership. She has an expired administrator's license. She was an elementary teacher for ten years and then an induction coach for Grant Wood AEA. Holli Lewis is an on-site supervisor. Ms. Lewis was previously a director at a childcare center and has a BA in business administration. Mindy Kies is also an on-site supervisor. She started with Creative Kids in June 2024. The program employs 19 staff members.

This program was formally Vinton Early Learning Center School Age program. They took over ownership and started caring for children on 06/03/24.The program operates out of Tilford Elementary School in Vinton. It operates Monday through Friday from 6:00 am until 6:00 pm. They currently serve preschool and school-aged children, ages three through twelve-years-old. There are currently 77 children enrolled.

The program operates out of three classrooms. There are two school age classrooms (one for kindergarten through second grade and one for third through fifth grade) and there is one preschool classroom. They use the gym when they cannot go outside. An inspection of each space was completed. Windows provide natural lighting. They provide childcare to preschool children all day during the school year.

The centers observed on the day of the licensing visit include library, Lego/blocks/Lincoln Logs, table toys, games, literacy, STEM, puzzles, transportation, dramatic play, art, and magnets. Centers were arranged in a manner that allowed easy movement between activities, but it also allowed for clear supervision by staff members. Materials were in good condition. The materials are located at child level, so they are easily accessible to the children.

Curriculum is developed by the teachers. A lesson plan was available for review in the school-age classrooms but was not available in the preschool classroom. Please make sure lesson plans are completed. A variety of resources are used, such as Pocket of Preschool, Heggerty Phonological Awareness and Lakeshore Counting Box. A daily schedule was posted in the school-age classrooms but must also be posted in the preschool classroom.

They participate in several field trips during the summer months. A school bus is used for transportation.

There is a bathroom near the classrooms that has three toilets, two sinks and a diaper changing table. Handwashing and diaper changing procedures were posted. There are additional bathrooms in the school.

The program uses the Playground app to communicate with parents and they keep electronic staff and children files in the app.

The staff members use two-way radios to communicate. Emergency numbers with the center's address and phone number

were posted in classrooms. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and evacuation diagrams were posted by the main program doors and outdoor exits throughout the center.

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. I reviewed documentation of monthly playground inspections. A radon test was completed in January 2025 and must be repeated in five years. Results were within EPA guidelines. The annual fuel burning inspection was completed and no concerns were noted. Carbon monoxide detectors are on site and are part of the fire system on the ceilings. Outlets were protected. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 12/23/24.

The program is not on the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) but follows the guidelines. They receive breakfast, lunch and a morning and afternoon snack. All the children receive free breakfast and lunch through the Summer Meal Program in June and July through the school during summer months. When the free lunch is not running, families provide their own lunch from home during the summer months. During the summer months the school-age children and preschool children receive a morning and afternoon snack provided by the center. During the school year the school-age children only receive an afternoon snack.

During the school year the preschool children receive breakfast, lunch and a morning and afternoon snack. Breakfast and lunch are provided by the school and snacks are provided by the childcare center.

The school cafeteria workers are present during the summer and serve the school-age children cafeteria style and they eat in their classroom. The preschool children have their food delivered to their room. Family style is not used. Menus were available for review. Mostly disposable products are used but when dishwashing is necessary it is done in the school kitchen. There is a refrigerator in the staff room and thermometers were present. They also use a refrigerator in the school kitchen. Food items on hand were stored according to NHSPS guidelines.

The program uses Members Mark Sanitizer to sanitize the food tables.

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 posted. A no-smoking sign was posted at the entrance.

The program uses the school's playground for school-age children. This is fenced in. This is a large, spacious area. In one area there is poured in place fall surfacing. There is a shade structure with picnic tables and a bench. There are also trees for shade. There are multiple large pieces of climbing equipment with several activities including slides and climbing walls. There is a web climber. There is also smaller equipment with slides. There are teeter totters, balance beams and a concrete area with basketball hoops. There is a Gaga Ball area.

There is another area where woodchips are used for fall surfacing. There are swings, monkey bars, a zipline and a web climber. Woodchips should be raked regularly under the equipment so there are not deep gaps under the swings.

There is a fenced in playground for preschool children. It uses poured in place fall surfacing. The area has a piece of climbing equipment with slides. There ae swings, spinning toys and teeter totter. There is an area that has woodchips and a sandbox. There is a shade shelter over the sandbox. There is a sensory table and picnic tables for the children to rest.

The leadership of the program is committed to providing a safe environment for the children. They work closely with staff members to make sure they are trained on licensing standards. When concerns have arisen, they are corrected immediately and staff members are trained on new policies. Staff members had great interaction with the children. They provided attention to each child. They were patient with children and were flexible with their schedule. Staff members acknowledged the feelings of upset children and talked with them about how they cared about them and having a good day. They were empathetic. Staff members were engaged in positive conversation. They had the children involved in fun and creative learning activities that encouraged imagination. There was good communication between staff members regarding the routine and they kept the children informed about the routine for the day. Staff members entertained children during transitions. They used play to work on counting and colors. Staff members were enthusiastic and provided the children with praise. They assisted with handwashing and complimented good manners. The children appeared to enjoy their time at the center.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The center provides all the children with a water bottle with their picture on it.

The center uses the Playground app to communicate with parents and the parents love it.

The program participates in several field trips during the summer months.

Ms. Lewis states the program has a great relationship with the school.

Ms. Lewis states they work very hard to keep all the children in care, even if they have difficult behaviors. They meet with the parents and involve Grantwood AEA. AEA helps provide great strategies. Ms. Lewis states Ms. Zuspann and Ms. Fish are both interventionalists and they teach staff members different strategies to work with children also.

Ms. Lewis states the training is great at the center. Staff members have more hours than are required. The preschool staff members are currently taking PBIS training.

Ms. Lewis states they plan to work toward an IQ4K level in the future.

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

N/A

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 Mindy Kies as an on-site supervisor.

The current capacity of the program is 83 children with the use of the cafeteria and art room. When they move to the three newly constructed rooms this fall their capacity will be 71 children within the classrooms. Two of the rooms have a capacity of 23 children and one room has a capacity of 25 children. However, they will also be using the gym for program space at times so they wish to keep the capacity at 83 children.

*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.