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

Name of Center: Creative Kids Company - Shellsburg **Enrollment:** 57 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 52176

Street: 203 Cottage ST **City:** Shellsburg Iowa **Zip** 52332 **County:** Benton

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

Director's Name: Kelsey Fish & Meredith Zuspann **Phone Number:** 319-436-5953

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

Date(s) of Visit: 04-29-2025

Licensing Visit X **Unannounced Visit** **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: 02-27-2023

Comments : The preschool room that will be inspected in the fall was inspected on 05/13/24.

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*	*Summer Only*

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General	0	0	21	75	96
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

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

Licensing Consultant: Becky Frost **Date:** 06-24-2025

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

N/A

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

On 04/29/25 I made an unannounced off year licensing visit to Creative Kids Company in Shellsburg. I met with both Holli Lewis, an on-site supervisor. Ms. Lewis was previously a director at a childcare center and has a BA in business administration. Meredith Zuspann and Kelsey Fish are the owners and directors of the program. They took over ownership on 05/27/23 and started caring for children on 06/01/23. Ms. Fish has a BA in elementary education and a 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 for four years. Ms. Zuspann has a BA in education for K-8 with an endorsement in special education and a MA in Teaching in the Reading Specialist program. She has been employed as an elementary teacher since August 2009. Mindy Kies is also an on-site supervisor. She started with Creative Kids in June 2024. The program employs fifteen staff members.

Ms. Fish and Ms. Zuspann are also the owners and directors of Creative Kids Company-Vinton. They started at the Vinton location on 06/03/24.

The program is in Shellsburg Elementary School. The program started in 2015 under the previous ownership. The center is a for profit program that operates year-around, Monday through Friday from 6:00 am until 6:00 pm, all day during planned no-school days, weather closures and the summer. They serve preschool and school-aged children. During school the school-age program operates from 6:00-7:30 am and 3:30-6:00 pm. The program provides childcare for preschool children all day during the school year. There are currently 57 children enrolled.

The program primarily operates out of the school cafeteria and one classroom. The cafeteria is an open space that allows for free play and organized activities. The classroom provides a cozier environment for the younger children. An inspection of each room was completed. Natural lighting is used. They also use the outside playground area and gym. The centers observed include arts and crafts, library, blocks/Legos, games, table toys, puzzles, math, science, dramatic play/dolls, transportation and magnets. Centers are stored in cabinets inside the cafeteria and there are several shelves of activities in the classroom. There is also a large storage cabinet in another area of the school that has several supplies.

The classroom for preschool children (classroom 47) was approved by the fire marshal on 05/13/24. The capacity of the room is 21 children.

The children use two bathrooms in the cafeteria. The girl's bathroom has three toilets and the boy's bathroom has one toilet and two urinals. There are three sinks outside of the bathrooms. Handwashing procedures were posted. The preschool children use two bathrooms across from their room. The girl's bathroom has five toilets and three sinks and the boy's bathroom has two toilets, three urinals and two sinks. Handwashing procedures were posted in both locations. There are additional bathrooms located in the school. There is a sink in the preschool classroom and procedures were posted.

Cots are used to nap for the preschool children.

The program has use of staff cell phones and emergency numbers were posted with the program's address and phone

number on the posting. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and evacuation diagrams were not posted by the main program door and outside exits. You must post the emergency evacuation diagram near all the exits out of the cafeteria and classroom. A daily schedule was posted.

During the summer months of operation, the program runs a curriculum with themes and activities. They also participate in field trips during the summer months.

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

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. The preschool program is only practicing the drills during school hours. The school-age children are not practicing fire or tornado drills. Both the preschool and school-age children must practice both fire and tornado drills every month during the licensing hours of operation. For the preschool children make sure you are doing the drills at all different hours of operation. They should be practiced on separate dates and documented and be available for review during licensing visits. The program thought the school-age children did not need to do the drills because they do them during the hours of operation.

I reviewed documentation of monthly playground inspections. A radon test was completed in January 2025 and must be repeated in five years. The results were within EPA guidelines. A fuel burning inspection was completed and no concerns were noted. A carbon monoxide detector is present and located on the west wall in the cafeteria. Outlets were protected. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 02/27/23. The preschool classroom received a fire marshal inspection on 05/13/24.

The program is not on the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) but follows the guidelines. During the school year the program provides an afternoon snack for the school-age children. When there is no school during the school year the program provides a morning and afternoon snack and the children `bring a lunch from home. During the summer months, the childcare program provides a morning and afternoon snack and they use the free breakfast and summer lunch program run at the school. When the free lunch is not running, families provide their own lunch from home. Menus were available for review.

For the preschool children during the school year, the program provides breakfast, lunch and a morning and afternoon snack. They receive breakfast and lunch from the school. The children eat in their classroom. Menus were available for review.

The program has use of a refrigerator in the school kitchen and a thermometer was present. Disposable products are used for snacks. Food items on hand were stored according to NHSPS guidelines.

The program uses Member’s Mark Sanitizer for the food tables.

The school playground uses woodchips for fall surfacing under most of the equipment. There are several large gaps under the swings and climbing equipment. The woodchips should be raked so that there is not a fall height greater than 18 inches under the equipment. To make this happen the school should purchase additional woodchips. There are multiple areas where the landscaping material is exposed.

There is a rope climber that uses a poured in place fall surfacing. There is also a concrete area for the children. There are multiple pieces of climbing equipment that has slides and other activities. There are rings, monkey bars, steppingstones, a balance beam and a climbing wall. There are multiple sets of swings. Benches and picnic tables are available for the children to rest.

In the gym, the school allows them to use their materials.

The parent information is in the entrance of the cafeteria and the entrance of the classroom. The mandatory reporter, childcare consultant and the handbook availability were posted. Please update my contact poster to show my new email address and the new HHS website. The license was conspicuously posted. A no-smoking sign was posted at the entrance.

Staff members have a great routine for the children. It is obvious they are consistent with the routine and the children felt comfortable in the program. Staff members stayed on top of cleaning following snack. Staff members were patient and they offered choices to the children. They provided the children with praise and used positive redirection when necessary. Staff members were actively engaged with the children in activities and moved around the space to interact with all the children.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

Ms. Lewis states having employees who have so many years of teaching experience is great. They see less behaviors and

the staff members have “tips and tricks” up their sleeves. Staff members meet with the parents.

Ms. Lewis states that Ms. Fish and Ms. Zuspann are “super organized”. They listen to everyone’s input and make a plan with it.

Ms. Lewis states they have weekly meetings with the preschool staff members and they have a weekly leadership meeting to divide up tasks so that nothing falls between the cracks. They have a monthly meeting with the school-age staff members.

Ms. Lewis states they have a great and fun summer planned for the school-aged children that includes several field trips. Two days are park days, two days are swim days and the fifth day is a big field trip. They use a school bus for transportation.

The program has shift responsibilities posted so all staff members know what they are expected to do.

The school is very supportive of the program.

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

109.10(15)b: Emergency instructions, phone numbers, and diagrams for fire, tornado, and flood shall be visibly posted and documented at least once a month for fire and tornado. Records shall be maintained for current and previous year. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and evacuation diagrams were not posted by the main program door and outside exits. You must post the emergency evacuation diagram near all the exits out of the cafeteria and classroom. The preschool program is only practicing the drills during school hours. The school-age children are not practicing fire or tornado drills. Both the preschool and school-age children must practice both fire and tornado drills every month during the licensing hours of operation. For the preschool children make sure you are doing the drills at all different hours of operation. They should be practiced on separate dates and documented and be available for review during licensing visits. The program thought the school-age children did not need to do the drills because they do them during the hours of operation.

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.

The program had a licensing binder with all the important information I review during visits. This is a great idea, but the information inside the binder was mostly outdated. Please try to keep this up to date.

An administrative change is being made to name Holli Lewis and Mindy Kies as on-site supervisors.

*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.