Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Step Ahead Child Care & Preschool

Provider No.: 47932

Address: 2635 Berkshire Pkwy Ste 200, Clive, IA, 50325

County: Polk

Director's Name: Crystal Steffen and Anna Zwiefel

On-Site Supervisor: Cheryl Halas

Phone Number: 5159876991

E-Mail: anna@stepaheadchildcare.org

HHS Visit Date: 10/15/2025

Licensing Period: 12/01/2024 to 12/01/2026

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 10/09/2025

Comments: Clive Marshal Marshal . Fire Marshal inspections are due at least every three years for licensing. A new inspection was completed on the new building on the above date.

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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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	28	21	52	0	101
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

An off-year inspection was conducted on 10/15/25. The owner/director and assistant director were both present for this visit.

All areas of the program were observed. These areas observed consisted of classroom observations and activities, ratios, nutritional practices, health and safety practices, playground observation, field trip and transportation practices, and administrative review.

Step Ahead Child Care and Preschool was given permission to open on 10/24/16. The center will be moving into a new building on 10/24/25 just across the parking lot from the current center. The center serves children six weeks in age to five/six years in age using the Iowa Early Learning Standards Curriculum. Hours of operation are 6:30am - 5:30pm Monday through Friday and year-round. In the new building, there are five classrooms. Capacities are as followed:

0 -18 months: 12 children.
6 - 24 months: 16 children.
24 - 36 months: 21 children.
Three year old: 26 children.
Four/Five year old: 26 children.

The owner and head director of the program is Crystal Steffen. Crystal has an AA degree in Business Administration. Crystal also has past experience working in child care. The assistant director is Anna Zwiefel. Anna has a BA degree as well as past experience working in child care. Cheryl Halas is the on-site supervisor and meets the qualifications for her position.

During the visit, the current building and the new building were both observed. As stated above, the center will be moving into the new building on 10/24/25 and open for business there on 10/27/25. Children were observed in a variety of activities. Older children were at the city playground near the center playing. Staff were spaced out and interacting with the children. In the infant classroom, some children were napping in cribs. Some children were being held. In the other classrooms, children were observed in art/writing activities and also playing with puzzles and other manipulative toys. Toys, bedding, and other equipment in classrooms are being sanitized daily. Staff and children gave specific answers as to where they relocate to for monthly fire and tornado drills.

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

The center utilizes CCR&R and their nurse consultant on a regular basis.

Monthly staff meetings are held.

The center has a website, Facebook page, and Instagram page. The center also utilizes the application, Teams, for internal communication and Brightwheel and Mid Sioux for parents.

Several of the staff have worked together in the past at different centers. Overall, staff work well together per management. Management stated they have a great staff.

There is a secure entrance into the building and there will be for the new building as well.

The center was clean and nicely decorated. Staff were actively engaged with children.

One parent-teacher conferences is held each year. Parents are highly encouraged to participate in center activities and questionnaires on ways to continue to make the center a good experience for parents.

The center has good community partnerships.

Assessments are recorded at specific times throughout the year for children ages three to five.

Enrollment remains steady.

The owner is a member of the Child Care Success Academy. The owner also has her NAC.

The center will be moving into a newly remodeled building across the parking lot from the current building at the end of 10/2025.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

109.10(7): First aid kit: The center shall ensure that a clearly labeled first aid kit that is sufficient to address minor injury or trauma is available and accessible to staff at all times when children are: In the center. In the outdoor play area. On field trips (away from the center).
Staff did not have their first-aid kit with them at the city park.

109.10(13)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.
October - December drills were not recorded.

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

Staff did not have their first-aid kit with them at the city park.

October - December drills were not recorded. All other drills were documented.

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

Radon testing will be needed in all classrooms in the new building prior to 10/27/26. If levels are below 4.0, the center can move to testing for radon at least every five years. So long as radon levels remain below 4.0, they can remain on a five year plan. If at the next testing, levels in any classroom come back 4.0 or higher, the center will have to have a mitigation plan, retest, and at least temporarily move back to testing every two years.

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

The annual furnace will be needed starting no later than 10/27/26.

It was previously noted that the center does not go on field trips other than to the nearby park behind the building. The center will bring agencies into the program for presentations to children.

For nutrition, the center provides children an AM snack, PM snack, and lunch daily.

I-Power and IQ4K were discussed at the visit. The center has initiated the IQ4K process, but putting this on hold temporarily as they get prepared and settled into their new building. Staff appear to be uploading their training into I - Power.

The center application for moving into their new space was received on 10/14/25.

Date: 10/15/2025

HHS Licensing Consultant: Nate Knepper

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**.