Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Sonshine Station Preschool

Provider No.: 30182

Address: 5601 Sunnybrook DR, Sioux City, IA, 51106

County: Woodbury

Director's Name: Emily Stephas

On-Site Supervisor:

Phone Number: 7122245611

E-Mail: sonshinestationpreschool@gmail.com

HHS Visit Date: 02/23/2026

Licensing Period: 03/01/2026 to 03/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 02/18/2025

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

- [ ] PTO
- [X] Licensing Visit
- [ ] Drop In
- [ ] Administrative Change

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

Quality Rating: 2

- [ ] Accrediation

Program Duration:

- [ ] Year-Round
- [X] School Year
- [ ] Summer Only

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HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday		9:00 AM to 11:30 AM	
Tuesday		9:00 AM to 11:30 AM	
Wednesday		9:00 AM to 11:30 AM	
Thursday		9:00 AM to 11:30 AM	
Friday		9:00 AM to 11:30 AM	
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

- [ ] Infant(0-<24 Months)
- [ ] Toddler
- [X] PreSchool
- [ ] School Age
- [ ] All Ages

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General			48		48
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

On February 23, 2026, I conducted an unannounced visit at Sonshine Station Preschool, located in a designated preschool wing of Sunnybrook Community Church. The wing was built specifically for preschool programming and includes two rooms: one currently used as a classroom and the other designated as a recess room. I met with Emily Stephas, the program director. Emily has been with Sonshine Station since 2022, initially serving as a lead teacher before assuming the director role. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and Human Services and previously worked as a paraeducator for four years prior to joining the program. Emily shared that the program operates Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. This school year, the program offers only morning preschool sessions with no afternoon classes. The schedule is structured as follows:

Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 4-year-old preschool
Tuesday, Thursday: 3-year-old preschool

The facility appeared clean, organized, and appropriately equipped for preschool activities. The program utilizes one classroom for instructional time and the second room for indoor recess. Emily demonstrated familiarity with licensing requirements and provided information about staff qualifications, daily routines, and safety practices.

The environment appeared clean, organized, and appropriately equipped for preschool activities. Emily demonstrated familiarity with licensing requirements and provided information regarding staff qualifications, daily routines, and safety practices.

I observed all areas of the center, including classrooms, activities, nutrition practices, health and safety procedures,

playground, and administrative records

A daily schedule of activities was posted, and the classroom displayed colors, shapes, the alphabet, and children's artwork throughout the room. The center utilizes Creative Curriculum and theme-based learning. Creative Curriculum is a research-based, comprehensive early childhood curriculum that emphasizes learning through play and exploration. It integrates all developmental domains—social-emotional, physical, cognitive, and language—while promoting hands-on experiences and individualized instruction. Teachers use observations to guide planning and adapt activities to meet each child's needs, often incorporating thematic units to make learning engaging and connected to real-world experiences. The classroom was arranged into well-defined learning centers, and children were actively engaged in activities. One center featured two plants that the children had named, along with pictures documenting their growth, providing a hands-on science experience and fostering responsibility and observation skills. Teachers were highly engaged with the children, actively participating in activities and providing guidance and support to foster learning and independence.

The refrigerator was clean and maintained at the appropriate temperature. Nutritious snacks are typically provided by parents each week, and while the center is not currently enrolled in the CACFP food program, it follows CACFP guidelines for nutrition. The center does not administer medication. Tables are sanitized prior to children eating, and good sanitary procedures are followed throughout the facility. A first aid kit was available and sufficient to treat minor injuries. Safety measures were verified: fire and tornado drills are documented monthly, and the center has completed a radon test with results within normal range, as well as the annual heating inspection. A functioning carbon monoxide detector is present in the facility.

The center has a fenced-in playground adjacent to the church, which includes shade and wood chips spread throughout the play area for safety. The program recently added a climbing structure to enhance outdoor play opportunities. When outdoor play is not possible, children remain indoors and utilize the second preschool classroom for large motor activities. The center does not transport children; however, they plan an annual field trip to Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center in April, where parents transport and remain with their children during the visit.

Parents of the program are actively involved, and the center maintains strong communication and engagement with families, fostering a collaborative environment.

The Sunnybrook Church will be remolding the church which doesn't allow for space for the preschool which will definitely be a lost to this community.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

Iowa Quality for Kids (IQ4K®) is Iowa's voluntary Quality Rating and Improvement System that recognizes licensed early childhood programs across five levels of quality. Reaching Level 2 indicates a commitment to continuous improvement beyond basic licensing standards. In short, being at IQ4K Level 2 shows that Sonshine Station Preschool has gone beyond foundational standards, actively built upon them, and is taking structured steps toward delivering a higher quality of early care and education.

Staff demonstrated very positive interactions with the children, engaging warmly and encouraging participation in activities while fostering a supportive and nurturing environment.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

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

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5. Special Notes/Recommendations

It is recommended to continue working with CCRR for support.

Please email consultant by 03-06-25 confirming that all aspects have been corrected.

A full license is recommended.

At least one visit will be made to the center during the next year.

Date: 02/23/2026

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**.