Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Stepping Stones Child Care Center Inc

Provider No.: 26087

Address: 701 S 3rd AVE, Winterset, IA, 50273

County: Madison

Director's Name: Angie Kirk

On-Site Supervisor: Cortni Kirk, Ambre Benge, Terri Finnell, Donna Christiansen

Phone Number: 5154625831

E-Mail: dacmab242003@yahoo.com

HHS Visit Date: 03/09/2026

Licensing Period: 04/01/2025 to 04/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 10/01/2023

Comments: State Fire Marshal inspections are due at least every three years. The date on the last inspection form was listed as 10/1/23 although that fell on a Sunday. The center will be due for another inspection in the Fall of 2026.

Report Visit Type:

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

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

Quality Rating: 3

- [ ] Accrediation

Program Duration:

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

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday	6:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Tuesday	6:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Wednesday	6:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Thursday	6:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Friday	6:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	15	24	44	60	143
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

An off-year inspection was conducted on 3/9/26. The owner/director was present throughout the inspection.

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.

Stepping Stones Child Care Center is located in Winterset, IA. The owner/director is Angie Kirk. Angie has been the owner and director of the center since 1999. Cortni Kirk is one on-site supervisor. Cortni has an AA and BA degree in Liberal Arts and Education and has worked at this center off and on for several years. Ambre Benge is another on-site supervisor as of 2/7/17. Ambre has worked at the center since 2009. Terri Finnell is the third on-site supervisor. Terri has a BA degree and has worked at this center since 2013. Donna Christiansen is the most recent on-site supervisor as of 4/17/18. Donna has worked at Stepping Stones for many years.

The center serves children two weeks in age to roughly 12 years in age using a combination of the Creative Learning Curriculum, Al's Pals Curriculum, and Handwriting Without Tears Curriculum. There are five classrooms. The infant room has a capacity of 12 children. The toddler classroom has a capacity of 13 children, but the center caps the room at 12 children. The two/three year old classroom has a capacity of 11 children. The Pre-K classroom has a capacity of 47 children. The school-age classroom has a capacity of 60 children. At this time, there are 1-5 children enrolled at the center.

During the inspection, one child was being bottle fed in the infant classroom. Other children in the infant classroom were engaged in free-choice play with the age-appropriate toys and equipment in the classroom. All other classrooms were

outside on their playground areas enjoying extra time outside since the weather was sunny and warm. Toys and other equipment are being sanitized daily. Diaper changing tables are being disinfected after each use. Staff gave specific answers as to where their classrooms relocate to for monthly fire and tornado drills.

NUTRITION: The center serves children breakfast, lunch, and a PM snack. Children eat in their classrooms. Meals are served family style. The center participates in CACFP. All food menu items were credible. Food storage was sufficient. The center employs two cooks.

TRANSPORTATION/FIELD TRIPS: The center has two vans and a bus. These were observed. The center will transport children to/from school either in the vehicles or by walking the children to/from. Field trips are taken primarily during the summer months. These vehicles are regularly serviced. The center provides the booster and car seats. For all transportation, a first-aid kit and children's emergency contacts are taken along.

PLAYGROUND: The center has a large playground area that wraps around three sides of the building and these playgrounds are also divided up by ages. Sand is used for surfacing around the climbing structures. The building and shade structures provide shade. Monthly playground inspections are being conducted.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

The owner/director has her National Administrator Credential.

The center participates in IQ4K which is a voluntary program based on best practice.

The center participates in the food program (CACFP).

The center has a good mix of tenured (some over 15 years) and new staff. Monthly staff meetings are held. There is an element of the center having a family environment yet management having clear expectations for the center.

Staff files were again nicely organized. Staff are encouraged to get more training hours (20+) than the minimum required amount of professional development training hours required.

There is a secure entrance into the center.

The center participates in the 5-2-1-0 program as it relates to a healthy lifestyle.

Several staff members continue to participate in TEACH, WAGES, CDA's, and other degrees. One on-site supervisor now has a teaching license.

The center is uses the online application Brightwheel to even better communicate with parents.

Enrollment remains steady.

The center has hand-free soap dispensers and water facets.

Staff bios and credentials are posted near the main entrance.

A security camera system is in place.

The center employs two full-time cooks.

The center has good community partnerships.

Good child-staff activities and interactions were observed throughout the visit.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

109.7(1): All staff (within first three months of employment):Iowa's training for the mandatory reporting of child abuse.- At least one hour of training regarding universal precautions. Certification in First Aid infant, child, and adult cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) or equivalent certification approved by the Department. A valid certificate indicating the date of training and expiration date shall be maintained. Certification in infant, child, and adult first aid that uses a nationally recognized curriculum or is received from a nationally recognized training organization including the American Red Cross, American Heart Association, American Safety and Health Institute, or MEDIC First Aid or an equivalent certification approved by the Department. A valid certificate indicating the date of training and expiration date shall be maintained. Minimum health and safety trainings, (Essentials) approved by the Department. If significant changes occur to content, the Department may require the training be renewed.
ONE NEWER STAFF HAS ESSENTIALS TRAINING NOW COMPLETED, BUT IT WAS DONE AFTER THE FIRST 90 DAYS OF EMPLOYMENT.

109.11(4)a: Center must have safe outdoor program area adjacent to the center, with sufficient square footage to accommodate at least 30 percent of the enrollment capacity at any one time at 75 spear feet per child. Outdoor space must: Be free from litter and unsafe materials and free from contamination by the drainage or ponding of sewage or storm water. Include safe play equipment and an area of shade. Include fencing to protect from bodies of water or vehicular traffic.
In a younger child area of the playground, the movable climbing structure did not have six foot fall zone surfacing. THIS ISSUE WAS CORRECTED DURING THE INSPECTION.

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

N/A.

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

Radon testing was last tested 1/4/24 - 4/5/24. Radon levels came back below the 4.0 cutoff. Radon can now be done every five years if levels are below 4.0. So long as radon levels remain below 4.0, the center can remain on a five-year testing plan. If at the next testing, levels are 4.0 or higher in any classroom, the center will have to retest (and possibly consult with a radon mitigation specialist) and then go back to a two-year plan for testing.

The annual furnace inspection was last completed on 5/9/25.

I-Power was discussed at the visit. It appears all staff have I-Power profiles and uploading training hours.

After last year's inspection, the center was instructed to cut the zip ties on the fence. The center did so, but it appeared one zip tie could still be cut a little shorter.

In regards to managing child behaviors, the director stated she has regular conversations with her staff about working together, remaining calm, and really getting to the root cause for why a child may be acting out (communication with the child as well). The director/owner stated she also makes it a point for her staff to get to know the families they care for.

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Date: 03/10/2026

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**.