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

Name of Center: First Steps Academy **Enrollment:** 16 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 52828

Street: 806 Main St **City:** Boyden Iowa **Zip** 51234 **County:** Sioux

Mailing Address: PO Box 26, Boyden, IA, 51234

Director's Name: Shelby Kooima **Phone Number:** 712-631-5877

On-Site Supervisor(s): **E-Mail:** shelbykooima@gmail.com

Date(s) of Visit: 06-10-2025

X **Licensing Visit** X **Unannounced Visit** **Off Year Visit** **Administrative Change**

LICENSING VISITS

X **New Application** **Re-Application** **NA**

Signed Application (470-0722) Received X **Yes** **No** **NA** **Date Signed:** 04-30-2025

FIRE INSPECTION X **State** **Local** **NA** **Is Fire Inspection Approved?** X **Yes** **No** **NA**

Date Inspected: 04-21-2025

Comments :

LICENSE TYPE: X **Child Care** **Preschool (ages 3-5 meets three hours or less per day)**

Financial Type: Profit X 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			15	15	30
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 05-01-2025 to 05-01-2027
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Leann Steinhauer **Date:** 06-11-2025

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

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

I completed an unannounced visit at this new center on 06/10/25 where I was able to meet with Director Shelby Kooima. I have met Shelby previously as we have met to discuss the licensing process. She is currently in her final year of college and will earn a Bachelor of Arts Degree for early childhood education. She has connected with her Childcare Resources and Referral team for assistance. Shelby participated in the Lead Pilot classes and is a very organized director.

The center has a well written parent handbook and staff handbook. The handbook reflects the requirements of the HHS licensing manual and the code of ethics for the center correlates with the NAEYC which promotes high standards for childcare.

The center is located near the city library, and they take advantage of programs offered there. On the day of my visit the children were enjoying a juggler at the library. There has also been a travelling zoo and an upcoming dairy program and a summer full of other activities at the library. The center is also planning on utilizing the splash pad in Boyden for another community activity.

There are 16 children enrolled in the program. There were 11 children present at the time of my visit. All areas of the program were observed. These areas consisted of classroom observations and activities, nutritional practices, health and safety practices, playground observation, field trip and transportation practices, and administrative review.

They use a theme-based curriculum. This week's theme is "Under the Sea" where all of their lessons and activities focus on things found in the sea. For example, their sensory activities include digging in sand for seashells. They are learning about the eco system and for this week their focus in on science.

There are visual aids hanging such as colors, the alphabet, numbers and children's artwork. The rooms have good arrangements with different areas for learning. They have quiet area for reading books, dramatic play, age-appropriate toys which were all in good repair.

The center is also focused on growing your child's socio-emotional skills. They are assisting the children in their care to problem solve and have a good self-esteem.

I observed good interaction between staff and the children in their care. Staff are present to welcome children to the center and provide a positive environment.

Medication is stored in a lock box or out of reach of the children. There is no one currently on medication. First aid kit is sufficient to treat minor injuries. Fire/tornado drills are documented each month. Radon tests are complete. Annual heating inspection is complete. Center has a functioning carbon monoxide detector. All program areas were observed to be clean and well maintained.

Bathrooms are clean and good handwashing was observed.

Although currently not on the CCFAP they do follow their nutritional guidelines. The kitchen is very clean and good sanitizing methods were observed. They utilize one room for their meals and staff sit with them eating family style.

The playground was observed. It is fenced in and has turf surface. There are markings on the turf that look like a football field making it more fun for the children.

They use the Bright Wheel app to communicate with parents. They have a clipboard with emergency contacts that they take with them when they are not in the center.

They do not have transportation.

The goal for this program is to work on their IQ4K's certification.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

This is the only licensed center in Boyden and is a good resource for the community it serves.

It is clean, well-organized and provides positive care to the children who attend.

The director is continuing her education to be a licensed teacher.

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

109.11(7)b: Centers at ground level that use basement area as program space or have a basement beneath program space: Testing and plan for remedy of radon is conducted.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Center is rechecking Radon in the fall of 2025. Please send consultant the results of this testing. If radon continues to be a high a plan for mitigation needs to be put into place.

A full license is recommended at this time.

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

*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.