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

Name of Center: First Steps Early Learning Center **Enrollment:** 74 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 17740

Street: 300 5th Ave NE **City:** Clarion Iowa **Zip** 50525 **County:** Wright

Mailing Address: PO Box 184, Clarion, IA, 50525

Director's Name: Alecia Frink **Phone Number:** 515-532-2778

On-Site Supervisor(s): Joleen Gonzales **E-Mail:** kidskorner@clargold.org

Date(s) of Visit:

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

LICENSING VISITS

New Application X **Re-Application** **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: 08-11-2022

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: X Infants (0-23 mo.) X 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	40	15	32	21	108
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 01-01-2022 to 01-01-2024
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Raymond Salsbury **Date:** 11-13-2022

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

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

An announced visit was made to the First Steps Early Learning Center on 10-24-22 where I met with center director Alecia Frink. Alecia is well qualified for the position with a BA in Family & Human Development, and prior experience in early childhood care and education. Joleen Gonzales the on-site supervisor and is also well qualified for the position based on her experience and on-going training with the center. Joleen has worked in early child care since 2002 and been the director of this program since 2015. This program was previously known under the name of Kids Korner Day Care Center and operated out of the Clarion middle school. The center is now operating as First Steps Early Learning Center and moved to the current location. This is the first visit to the program following that move. The center provides programming for infants through school age children. There are currently 74 children enrolled in the program served by 10 teachers. The primary focus of the visit was to review the physical facilities as the program as the program had been previously inspected at the prior location earlier in the year during which administrative records were reviewed and while there were some missing elements were within acceptable limits.

The center makes use of a shared facilities building but has secured access doors between the areas used by the daycare, and those used by other tenants. The center makes of use of classrooms that are determined by age with separate rooms for infants, toddlers, 2 year olds, 3 year olds, 4 year olds, and school age children. The infant area is further divided with a primary programing area, nursing room, changing room, and sleeping room. With the separate rooms for programming and sleeping the center will need to ensure that staff are present in each room when children are in the room. In addition the infant capacity is determined with no cribs being used in the primary programming area allowing for 35 sq.ft. per child. The other classrooms have a more open design with the classrooms for the 2, 3, and 4 year old children having a long open floor plan. The toddler and school rooms have an L shape design which does create some area where line of sight would be limited depending on staff positioning. This is more notable in the school age room and stall will need to ensure that they are aware of where the children are playing that they are responsible for and position themselves in a manner so that they can observe all children at all times. The infant, toddler, and 2 year old rooms have restroom facilities available directly from the room. The preschool and school age children make use of restrooms located off the main corridor outside of the classrooms. A large multi-spigot sink is located outside of the restrooms in the main corridor, and all classrooms with the exception of the school age room have additional sinks in the room. Each classroom has a secondary exit providing direct egress to the outside. Each room has windows that provide ample natural light and a view of the outdoors. The center does have a large open room that was initially intended as dining room area for meal service, or possible large motor indoor play but which will now be used as a staff break room. This space was not considered in the available capacity of the program but could be added for use in the future if needed. There were some construction issues that were still pending completion due to supply delays for materials but none that presented an immediate safety concern.

The center is still in the process of setting up classrooms. The classrooms do have furnishings and materials present that were brought over from the old location but Alicia stated that they are expecting a large shipment of new furnishings, toys, and other materials in the next several weeks which will replace some elements, and further supplement the materials in the classrooms. The current materials are arranged so that they do not create any blind areas. The toys and materials that were present were in good repair and appropriate to the ages of the children present. Good interactions were observed on the day of my visit with all staff being engaged with the children and attending to their needs. The center does need to ensure that

copies of the daily schedule and planned curriculums are posted in each classroom.

Health and safety policies and procedures are in place though some need to be reviewed. Good cleaning practices were observed during the visit with chemical cleaners stored where they were not accessible to children, and staff waiting for children to be out of the immediate area when using chemical cleaners. I was not able to observe a diaper change during the time of the visit but prior reports note that staff have followed established procedures in the past. The center does need to ensure that diapering procedures postings are posted by all changing stations. Good hand washing practices were observed with the teachers ensuring the children washed their hands as needed. Over the counter medications were labeled and stored where they were not accessible to children. A first kit is present in the center and does contain a good supply of materials necessary to address most common first aid needs. During the visit it was also noted that while the staff did store chemical cleaners and other items that could be a risk to children in areas where they would not be readily accessible purses were left out where children could access them. Purses, and diaper bags should also be stored where they are not accessible to children as these are frequently used to carry items such as medications that could pose a safety risk to children. Safe Sleep practices also need to be reviewed. As noted the infant room does have a separate sleeping room from the primary programming room. During the visit an 2 infants were observed to be sleeping in the room without a staff member present. In addition one was observed to be fully enclosed in a swaddler sleep sack, one had a blanket and pacifier with a ribbon clip, and a 3rd child was observed to be left to sleep in a rocker. All of these practices are prohibited.

The center does have a full kitchen and meals are prepared on-site. A menu is posted and substitutions were documented. The kitchen was clean. Good food storage and handling practices were observed on the day of my visit. Meals are served in the classrooms with the teachers sitting and eating with the children at the tables. The teachers did wear food service gloves, and used measured scoops when portioning meals. The meal served on the day of the visit did have a well balanced plate that met CACFP guidelines.

The center does have an on-site playground space which is fenced but is still under construction and is not being used at this time. The center is currently making use of a public park located across the street from the center. While this is allowable staff will need to ensure that they inspect the equipment and grounds each day prior to use, and ensure that children are limited to the equipment which is developmentally appropriate to the children.

All required notices had not yet been posted in an area that was readily visible and accessible to parents and visitors as the center is waiting for an bulletin board to be installed. Evacuation maps that include both written and diagram instructions for fire and tornado evacuation need to be posted by all exits from all programming spaces. Staff and child files were not reviewed during this visit as these had been previously reviewed prior to the relocation of the center and were within acceptable limits. The center will need to conduct Radon testing within the next year.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

This program has relocated to a large facility that provides for expansion of programming and the number of children that can be served. The center is still working to establish classrooms and settle into the routines of daily programming.

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

109.4(3)b: Postings are required for: Mandatory reporter requirements.Notice of availability of handbook.Program activities.These shall be posted in area frequented by parents or public.
-- All postings were missing on the day of the visit.

109.12(5)e: The provider shall follow safe sleep practices recommended by AAP for infants under one year of age:Infants shall always be placed on their back for sleep.Infants shall be placed on a firm mattress with a tight fitted sheet that meets Consumer Product Safety Commission federal standards.Infants shall not be allowed to sleep on a bed, sofa, air mattress or other soft surface. No child will be allowed to sleep in any items not designed for sleeping but not limited to, an infant seat, car seat, swing, bouncy seat.No toys, soft objects, stuffed animals, pillows, bumper pads, blankets, or loose bedding shall be allowed in the sleeping area with the infant.No co-sleeping shall be allowed.Sleeping infants shall be actively observed by sight and sound.If an alternate sleeping position is needed, a signed physician or physician assistant authorization with statement of medical reason is required.
-- Children were observed to be swaddled in cribs with the arms and legs tightly bound, sleeping in cribs with blankets and pacifiers with ribbon clips, and left to sleep in equipment not designed for sleeping. Children were also left sleeping in a room with no staff present in the room.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

A full license is recommended at this time. Please provide a written response to the licensing consultant identifying a plan of action to correct and maintain those aspects cited as not meeting licensing standards and identifying an anticipated date of compliance. 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.