Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Frontier Childcare

Provider No.: 24218

Address: 3021 78th ST, Norway, IA, 52318

County: Benton

Director's Name: Shelly Huxford

On-Site Supervisor: Sarah Sliter

Phone Number: 3192277996

E-Mail: shelly.huxford@frontiercoop.com

HHS Visit Date: 07/30/2026

Licensing Period: 08/01/2025 to 08/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 07/20/2026

Comments:

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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HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday	7:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Tuesday	7:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Wednesday	7:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Thursday	7:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Friday	7:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	26	12	38	36	112
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

Frontier Childcare is located in a building adjacent the Frontier Natural Products Co-op business and provides childcare to families employed by Frontier. This program offers year-round licensed childcare M-F 7:00am-6:00pm and serves age infant through school-age. Total enrolled and attending children were reported to be 65 on 7/30/2026.

The director of Frontier Childcare is Shelly Huxford. Ms. Huxford has been in the director role since January of 2013, has experience working with children and participates in professional development.

On 7/30/2026, program space was observed. Primary programming occurs in age defined classrooms. There are restrooms and handwashing sinks to accommodate capacity. The program has access to age defined outdoor play areas. All foods are stored and prepared in the on-site center kitchen. Frontier Childcare supports a healthy organic lifestyle and over 90% of childcare food served (including meats and fresh product) is organic. The program is committed to providing children with a low-sugar, non-artificial, GMO elimination diet. Items used on-site are also eco-friendly and PVC/BPA free. On 7/30/2026, activities observed were many and included infant cares, center play exploration, and outdoor large gross motor play. Evidence of previous days' learning included nicely displayed child artwork throughout the center (e.g. handprint pineapple art, handprint palm trees). Curriculum allowed for a variety of experiences that were observed to pique child interest as well as build cognitive skills, strengthen emotional intelligence, enhance physical coordination, and encourage the use of social graces. During the monitoring visit, routine transitions were observed including clean-up procedures, lunchtime rituals, restroom/drink breaks and quiet nap preparations. It was extremely noteworthy as to a group of 3yo children who were all observed to be greatly enjoying lunch foods! Several were overheard making comments including "Mmmm" and "this is so good". On 7/30/2026, staff were observed to be in ratio, utilizing positive behavior interventions when needed and engaged in programming with the children. Children appeared comfortable with staff and to be truly enjoying the day.

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2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

According to the program's written policies, Frontier Childcare "…is a family-oriented business that provides on-site childcare for the benefit and convenience of Frontier and its employees…" The goal of the program is "…to provide quality care for children while their parents are at work…"

Frontier Childcare has the following website for families and the community to learn more about their business and childcare:
https://www.newpi.coop/meet-the-locals/frontier-co-op. In May 2024, Frontier Childcare was noted in the online HR Brew's article entitled "How Frontier Co-op formalized a 40-plus year commitment to childcare benefits" (https://www.hr-brew.com/stories/2024/05/14/frontier-co-op-onsite-childcare-iowa).

Frontier Childcare operates under an advisory board located at Frontier headquarters in Norway, Iowa. As of 7/30/2026, ownership and management of Frontier Childcare remain consistent. The management team (e.g. board, Ms. Huxford, OSS) has systems of organization in place to help ensure administrative items are completed as required and maintained in a confidential manner. The management team continues to be knowledgeable of licensing guidelines as well as her own program's policies and procedures. Staff throughout the classrooms are seasoned and reported celebrating 21 years, 16 years, 10 years, 8 years, and 2 years of employment with Frontier Childcare. Notes of appreciation and gratitude towards staff from families and management were found displayed in various areas of the center. Management described their team of employees as excellent, reliable and committed to working with children.

As of 7/30/2026, Frontier was again found to be maintaining the required postings, maintaining a family program information area, utilizing technological communication resources, and offering family programming activities. Curriculum includes a combination of learning strategies incorporating teacher-inspired ideas, phonics work, math concepts, small and large gross motor, imaginative play experiences, and crafts. Curriculum also incorporates off-site field trip experiences (e.g. local parks), on-site guest speaker events, themed days, nature projects, and holiday-seasonal parties.

Frontier Childcare continues to have and update as needed policies and procedures that include those for safety, daily child contact, hand washing, diaper changing, cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting. On the day of this monitoring visit, staff and management were able to verbalize how they help ensure the children's space is sanitary and hazard free each day by following their current policies and procedures as well as maintaining checklists for cleaning and maintenance. Cleaning reminders were observed in various areas on-site. On 7/30/2026, management discussed how there is continued support from their advisory board, Frontier administration, Frontier maintenance department and Frontier custodial crew as to daily building and grounds conditions.

Frontier Childcare has emergency plans, policies, and procedures. This program has successfully navigated through flooding events, 2019 winter Polar Vortex, 2019 health (covid-19) pandemic, 8/10/20 Derecho Storm, 2021 food supply issues, 2022 infant formula shortages, air quality alerts (2023, 2025, 2026), technology outages (7/19/24 global technology outage, 10/10/2025 AWS outage, 10/29/2025 Microsoft outage) and 2026 nationwide cyclosporiasis outbreak.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

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

Not applicable.

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

To provide additional programming, considerations are being made to possibly convert a couple different areas of the building into new child rooms and child restrooms. A wooden staircase leading to an upper-level storage area will need careful planning and the number or child toilets and sinks will need to increase. As you continue to move forward and prior to any renovations, please consult with the fire marshal to ensure plans will meet fire code. Discussions additionally included obtaining necessary furnishings and child materials to meet the needs of an additional group of children. This

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includes child sized tables with chairs, rugs, diapering station with nonporous diapering surface, child sized shelves, home living play set, and so on.

Licensing strongly recommends at least one hand washing sink be installed in each child room that does not currently have one. This will help improve behaviors during transition time as well as improve ratio and supervision.

Any classroom carpets/rugs showing ware shall be replaced.

The jack-and-jill style child restroom currently shared among 2yo children and older preschool-age/kindergarten ready children has open toilets with stall partitions between the toilets but no doors. Given the ages of children using this restroom, privacy in the form of doors or curtains shall be installed.

To improve sanitation, obtain school-age cubbies or lockers for these children to store their personal items separately and off the floor.

Child materials are showing ware. Begin to increase and replace program furnishings and supplies including crafts, home living play centers, imaginative items (e.g. dress-up, shopping carts with pretend foods, baby dolls with clothes and blankies), blocks, books, board books, book display shelves, board games, puzzles, soft calming spaces (e.g. pillows, rugs) and sensory items.

Children shall not be allowed to play in any uncovered areas of sand. Areas of uncovered sand are often left to the elements as well as enjoyed by animals and insects for nesting and/or soiling, which increases sanitation and transmission of illness hazards.

The single axis swing structure and rusty chains is showing ware. Refurbish or replace.

Increase shade on all outdoor play areas. The unroofed pergola on the preschool-age playground does not provide sufficient shade.

US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) Public Playground Safety Handbook (https://www.cpsc.gov/Playground-Handbook) was updated in July of 2025. This handbook states "Loose-fill surfacing materials should be avoided for playgrounds intended for toddlers or children who frequently place objects in their mouths." Remove and replace the loose fill pea gravel on the outdoor playground.

To help with the items noted in this section of the report, please apply for funding and grant opportunities when they become available including the "Growing Iowa" fund (https://www.iowaccrr.org/child-care-providers/iowa-child-care-funding-opportunities/) designed to support childcare in Iowa by connecting with CCR&R.

Targeted Assessment: Behavior Management
Licensing discussed with management oversight of behavior management related to helping childcare staff: 1) understand expectations, 2) manage frustrations, and 3) monitor performance. Management discussed how they are present in the center talking with staff, stepping into rooms with elevated noise levels, encouraging staff to come to management with child behavior concerns, ensuring staff have breaks, offering review of policies at staff meetings, establishing child specific behavior plans when needed, completing written incident reports and exercising required polices for enrollment and discharge of children as needed. Management talked about staff regularly offering children accolades including "high 5s" to help encourage happiness, motivate positive social responses and build self-esteem. Ms. Huxford also talked about the uniqueness of their program in which the childcare is located on the same campus in which at least one parent is employed. Ms. Huxford acknowledged how the close proximity can lead to prompt increased program-family communication and assistance when needed.

The program's license remains in full status. All DHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period. Thank you for the visit.

Date: 08/13/2026

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HHS Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons

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**.