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

Name of Center: Little Farmers, LLC **Enrollment:** 25 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 49020

Street: 2902 US Hwy 52 **City:** Decorah Iowa **Zip** 52101 **County:** Winneshiek

Mailing Address: 2902 US Hwy 52, Decorah, IA, 52101

Director's Name: Allison Phillips **Phone Number:** 563-380-9848

On-Site Supervisor(s): Allison Phillips **E-Mail:** littlefarmers52@gmail.com

Date(s) of Visit: 10-07-2024

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 X **Yes** **No** **NA** **Date Signed:** 06-07-2024

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

Date Inspected: 06-10-2024

Comments :

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

Financial Type: X Profit Non-Profit NA

Accredition: Accredited NAEYC NSACA Other X NA

Program Serves: 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	0	10	34	10	54
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 06-11-2024 to 11-01-2026
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Becky Frost **Date:** 10-07-2024

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

N/A

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

On 10/07/24 I made an unannounced licensing visit to Little Farmers, LLC in Decorah. I met with Allison Phillips, the co-owner and director of the program. Ms. Phillips has a BA in early childhood and elementary education. She has previous experience working as a preschool teacher in two different programs. Josh Phillips, Ms. Phillip's husband, is also a co-owner. The center currently employs two staff members and they have substitutes available.

The program operates out of a free-standing building. They were given permission to open on 09/11/17. In August 2023 the program had to temporarily close due to health problems of a family member. They re-opened their license in June 2024.

The program operates Monday through Friday from 7:00 am until 5:30 pm. It serves children ages two-years-old through school-aged children. Children must be potty trained. Ms. Phillips is the lead preschool teacher and Mr. Phillips is her assistant. A preschool class is offered on Tuesday and Thursday from 8:30-11:30 am or Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8:30-11:30 am. Children must be enrolled in the preschool program to use the child care program during the day. Mr. and Mrs. Phillips both provide childcare. There are currently 25 children enrolled. The building has a total capacity of 54 children.

The program operates out of two rooms: one for preschool and one for child care. Windows provide natural lighting. The rooms are decorated with the children's art projects. There is an area for circle time in the preschool room.

The centers observed on the day of the licensing visit include library, Lego/blocks, table toys, games, puzzles, transportation, art, dramatic play, sensory items, listening, writing, math, science, and music. Centers were arranged in a manner that allowed easy movement between activities, but it also allowed for clear supervision by staff members. Materials were in good condition. The materials are located at child level so they were easily accessible to the children.

There are two bathrooms in each room. The bathrooms have one toilet and one sink. Handwashing procedures were posted. The children use washcloths to dry their hands. Cots are used to nap.

There was a phone with emergency numbers in the kitchen. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and evacuation diagrams were posted by the main program doors and outdoor exits. A daily schedule was posted in each room.

Ms. Phillips uses a variety of resources to prepare lesson plans. She has one large theme each month and then works around different specific areas of the theme each day. Ms. Phillips states her curriculum is child driven. The children pick the theme each month. She provides parent-teacher conferences twice each year (November and April) and completes Kindergarten readiness assessments on the children. A lesson plan was available for review. They do fun activities that coincide with the theme, such as a nature walk and the room has activities based on the theme. Ms. Phillips sends out a monthly newsletter to parents and she also sends out a note at the end of each week to parents outlining what they did each week.

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. I reviewed documentation of monthly playground inspections. A radon test was completed in November 2024 and must be repeated in two years. Results were within EPA guidelines. The annual fuel burning inspection was completed and no concerns were noted. A carbon monoxide detector was on site in each room. Outlets were protected. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 06/10/24. Fire marshal inspections must occur every three years. The program uses well water which is tested annually by the State Hygienic Laboratory. The last test was normal and they are waiting for the results of this year's report.

The program is not on the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) but follows the guidelines. The program serves breakfast, lunch and a morning and afternoon snack. Menus were available for review. Parents provide the morning snack and the center provides the afternoon snack. The program offers breakfast from 7:30-7:45 am. The center provides lunch or children can bring lunch from home. Ms. Phillips states they serve whole/organic foods to the children. The program has a large garden that the children help plant and take care of and they use the foods they grow for their meals. The garden has provided all their vegetables and fruits they eat. The children start the plants for the garden in January under a grow light. Allergies were posted.

The kitchen was observed to be clean. There is a dishwasher and three sinks available for dishes. There is one refrigerator and thermometers were present. Food was stored according to NHSPS guidelines. The program recycles and teaches the children to recycle. They also teach children composting. They use the compost in their garden.

The center uses bleach and water to sanitize the food tables.

The program has a large outdoor play area and a barn. There are a couple tarps that are used to provide shade and trees are planted. Woodchips are used for surface cushioning but there is no climbing equipment. The area is primarily a natural play area. There is a balance beam, logs, stepping stones and tires to play on. There is a sandbox, a dramatic play center and a basketball hoop. There is a chalkboard. There is a large grassy hill. There are plants and flowers. The air conditioning unit is fenced off so that children do not have access to that area.

The parent information is located on a bulletin board between the preschool room and daycare room. The mandatory reporter, child care consultant and the handbook availability were posted. The license was conspicuously hung. A no-smoking sign was posted at the entrance.

Staff and children files were reviewed at the time of the licensing visit. I reviewed eight children files. They were in good condition. There were two invalid immunization certificates. One was not on the mandated HHS immunization certificate and one was not signed by medical personnel. Ms. Phillips had notes on the immunizations to get them corrected. This will not be cited.

I reviewed two staff files. They were in great condition.

I reviewed policy and procedures, staff and parent handbooks. The necessary written emergency procedures and policies were present. Emergency Preparedness Plans have been completed.

Staff members were amazing with the children. I mentioned this in the last report, but it remains true that Mr. and Mrs. Phillips' passion for the program and children is evident. They provide a fun and educational learning environment, both inside the classroom and outside. Staff members were actively engaged with the children. Mr. Phillips was on the floor playing with the children while Mrs. Phillips worked with children on a craft. Staff members had great teamwork. They were enthusiastic and provided the children with praise. They were flexible and offered the children choices. They encouraged the children to use their imaginations. They used positive redirection when necessary. The children appeared to enjoy their time at the program.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

Ms. Phillips states they have a large garden with vegetables and fruits. The children help in planting and harvesting the garden. They eat the garden items for their meals and Ms. Phillips stars the items on the menu so parents know what came from the garden.

Ms. Phillips leaves extra vegetables or fruits for parents to take home.

Ms. Phillips states they program provides a unique environment and experience for the children.

Ms. Phillips states they have almost five acres and they mow paths through the prairie they are growing on their land for the children to take walks and explore nature.

Ms. Phillips states their program provides an outdoor connection to real world things (gardening, nature, composting).

The program has a "green" approach. They use washcloths to dry hands and they recycle.

Ms. Phillips states it is great to be able to give the children the farm experience. The farm has three goats, two dogs, three cats and a chicken. Vet records were available.

The program has a large natural outdoor playground space. There are woodchips for children to dig in, dramatic play equipment, a sandbox, a grassy hill, flowers, plants, logs to sit on or crawl on and a chalkboard. There is a bench for the children to rest. Trees are planted in this area.

Ms. Phillips states the program has parent helpers come to the center once each month to help with an activity so they can see what the children do during the program. The parents sign up each month. This month they are having a pumpkin party.

Mr. and Mrs. Phillips are committed to this program and it is their passion. They work long hours and are terrific with the children. They find fun and creative ways to teach the children while incorporating several outdoor and nature related activities.

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

N/A

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

A full license is issued. All DHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period.

An administrative change is being made to change the licensing period. I mistakenly only made the licensing period for one year. I have changed the expiration of the license to 11/01/26. Making the visit during the fall works best for observing the true nature of the program.

*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.