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

Name of Center: Little Sprouts Children's Center New Hampton **Enrollment:** 97 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 22117

Street: 201 N Locust **City:** New Hampton Iowa **Zip** 50659 **County:** Chickasaw

Mailing Address: 201 N Locust , New Hampton, IA, 50659

Director's Name: Amy Ameling **Phone Number:** 641-394-5840

On-Site Supervisor(s): Kathy Speicher & Monica Rittenberry **E-Mail:** lscc.director.nh@gmail.com

Date(s) of Visit: 05-29-2025

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

LICENSING VISITS

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

Signed Application (470-0722) Received X **Yes** **No** **NA** **Date Signed:** 06-17-2025

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

Date Inspected: 05-07-2025

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: X Infants (0-23 mo.) X 2 Years X Preschool-Age School-Age

Get-Well Evening Care Special Needs

SCHEDULE: X Year-round School-Year Summer Only

HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summary Only*

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General	20	17	30	32	99
Summer					0

QRS Rating: 1

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 07-01-2025 to 07-01-2027
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Becky Frost **Date:** 07-01-2025

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

N/A

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

On 05/29/25 I made an unannounced licensing visit to Little Sprouts Children's Center New Hampton. I met with Amy Ameling, the director. Ms. Ameling started with the program as the director in August 2020. She has a BA in elementary education with an early childhood endorsement. She has a minor in speech and theater secondary education. She is currently taking college credits in business and management classes. She has previous childcare experience. Ms. Ameling is NAC certified. I also met with Monica Rittenberry, the on-site supervisor. Ms. Rittenberry has been with the program since August 2016 and has an AA in early childhood. She is currently taking classes to get her BA in early childhood education. She is NAC certified. Kathy Speicher is also an on-site supervisor and a cook for the program. There are 29 staff members employed by the center.

The program operates out of the New Hampton First United Methodist Church. The program is not affiliated with the church. They started in this new location on 06/02/22. It is open Monday through Friday from 6:30 am until 6:00 pm. They serve children ages six weeks through preschool aged. There are currently 97 children enrolled.

The center operates out of the following classrooms: Sweet Peas (6 weeks through 6 months), Caterpillars (6-12 months), Butter Cups (12-18 months), Owlets (18-24 months), Cotton Tails (mixed-age infants), Sunflowers (two-year-olds), Tiger Lilys (older toddlers-2.5 through three year olds) and Grass Stains (three-year-old preschool). An inspection of each room was completed. Windows provide natural lighting. The rooms are decorated with the children's art projects, and posters to assist the children with the learning process, such as the alphabet, shapes, colors and numbers. The children's birthdays were posted. There are areas for circle time in the rooms.

The centers observed on the day of the licensing visit include library, Lego/blocks, table toys, games, puzzles, transportation, art, dramatic play, writing, math, science/discovery, woodworking, Play-Doh, sensory table 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 are easily accessible to the children.

Ms. Ameling states the center is using a curriculum based on the Iowa Early Learning Standards. Staff members use a variety of resources to develop lesson plans, but they have specific developmental boxes on the form to complete to make sure the lesson is well rounded and complete. Lesson plans were available in each room.

The center uses ProCare to complete daily sheets for the children under the age of two. It is also used to communicate with all the families.

The center works with Keystone AEA to provide services to children with identified needs. They also routinely work with Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) to provide a safe environment for the children.

There was a phone with emergency numbers and the center's address and phone number in the classrooms. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and evacuation diagrams were posted by all the main program doors and outdoor exits throughout

the center. A daily schedule was posted in each room.

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. I reviewed documentation of monthly playground inspections. A radon test was completed in June 2024 and is good for five years. The tests results were within EPA guidelines. A fuel burning inspection is not necessary because the gas boiler has been removed and the facility is now completely electric. Carbon monoxide detectors are in each of the rooms. They are located on the ceiling as part of the fire protection system. Outlets were protected. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 05/07/25.

The program participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The center provides the children with breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. Kathy Speicher is the cook. A new menu is prepared each week. The children eat in their classrooms. Family style is not used. Dishes are sometimes returned to the kitchen to be washed in an industrial dishwasher and other times staff members wash them in the classroom using the three-step method. Menus and allergies were posted. There is an industrial refrigerator and upright freezer in the kitchen and thermometers were present. Food was stored according to NHSPS guidelines. Ms. Speicher is very organized and has great knowledge of the CACFP rules.

In the infant rooms the center provides two brands of formula or parents can bring their own. The center provides baby food and cereal. Bottles are washed in the rooms using the three-step method.

There is a refrigerator in each room and thermometers were present.

The center uses bleach and water or Sani-Tyze Food Contact Sanitizer to sanitize the food tables and they use either bleach or Odoban to disinfect the changing tables.

I observed or discussed diaper changes with the staff members and proper procedures are followed.

Mats and cribs are used to nap.

The parent information is located on a bulletin board in the entrance. The mandatory reporter, childcare consultant and the handbook availability were posted. The license was conspicuously hung. A no-smoking sign was posted at the entrance.

The program has a playground across the street from the church. The area is fenced in. Rubber tiles are used for fall surfacing. There is a large tarp for shade. There are multiple pieces of climbing equipment. There is also a grassy area that has a sandbox. There is a small tarp over the sandbox for shade. There are also trees for shade. There are picnic tables and benches for the children to rest.

Staff and children's files were reviewed at the time of the licensing visit. I reviewed fifteen children files. Files must contain emergency contact information for the doctor and dentist of each child. The doctor's and dentist's name, phone number and complete street address must be provided. Five files did not provide adequate doctor emergency contact information and ten files did not provide adequate dental emergency contact information. The forms used do not have a space for addresses. This must be added to the form. Six files did not provide emergency contact phone numbers for next of kin. Parents must provide at least one person other than themselves. There was one outdated physical. This will not be cited because there was not a pattern of disregard.

I reviewed four 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. In the staff handbook it states mandatory reporter training is completed every five years. Please correct this because it is required every three years. Also, Essentials are only required to be taken once, not every five years. Add a statement to your professional development policy stating first aid, CPR, universal precautions, mandatory reporter and Essentials trainings need to be completed within 90 days.

Emergency Preparedness Plans have been completed.

Children were napping in several of the rooms. Soothing music was playing and staff members were sitting on the floor rubbing the children's backs. Staff members were nurturing and attentive. They held children on their laps and were rocking them. They communicated with the children at their level. They maintained positive conversation and modeled good manners. In the infant rooms they worked on tummy time. Staff members had good teamwork.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

Ms. Ameling states the center has an IQ4K level 1 that expires on 06/30/26.

Ms. Ameling pushed the board to revisit several policies regarding staff benefits including the implementation of holiday pay for full time staff members. She also renegotiated her contract to include health insurance reimbursement.

Ms. Ameling states they have been able to improve diversity by hiring three bilingual employees.

Ms. Ameling states the center became more active and visible in the community by participating in parades, sponsoring community activities, a Food Truck Rally and Trunk or Treat. Ms. Ameling was asked to serve on a Chamber of Commerce committee.

Ms. Ameling states they have expanded their CCA families to more than ten percent of their total enrollment.

Ms. Ameling and Ms. Rittenberry both applied for TEACH scholarships and they are expanding their knowledge of childcare administration with continuing college credits.

Ms. Ameling states the center overhauled their curriculum and lesson planning to align with Iowa Early Learning Standards.

The center has twelve staff members on the WAGES program (almost thirteen). All used the TEACH program. They currently have five staff members using the TEACH program. Ms. Rittenberry is going for a BA in early childhood. Ms. Ameling is using it for college credits in business and management classes.

Ms. Ameling states they have a good group of core staff members. The center is going to start celebrating work anniversaries.

GOALS:
To be able to improve the center with the addition of a bathroom adjacent to the big room. This would allow them to increase their numbers and help better nurture the self-help skills of handwashing and toileting.

Renew and advance up the IQ4K scale.

Secure funding for PBIS training for all staff members and have PBIS become a part of their annual staff training requirements.

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

109.9(2)a-c: All files contain sufficient information to allow the center to contact the parent or emergency contact at any time child is in center's care as well as who can pick up the child as authorized by the parent.
Six files did not provide emergency contact phone numbers for next of kin. Parents must provide at least one person other than themselves.

109.9(2)d: All files contain sufficient information and authorization to allow the center to secure emergency medical and dental services at any time child is in center's care.
Files must contain emergency contact information for the doctor and dentist of each child. The doctor's and dentist's name, phone number and complete street address must be provided. Five files did not provide adequate doctor emergency contact information and ten files did not provide adequate dental emergency contact information. The forms used do not have a space for addresses. This must be added to the form.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

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

*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.