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

Name of Center: The Farmstead Preschool Inc **Enrollment:** 76 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 22903

Street: 3603 Skyview Dr **City:** Cedar Falls Iowa **Zip** 50613 **County:** Black Hawk

Mailing Address: 3603 Skyview Dr, Cedar Falls, IA, 50613

Director's Name: Stephanie Hansen **Phone Number:** 319-277-1094

On-Site Supervisor(s): Stephanie Hansen **E-Mail:** farmstead.ps@gmail.com

Date(s) of Visit: 12-03-2024

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:** 11-04-2024

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

Date Inspected: 04-24-2024

Comments :

LICENSE TYPE: **Child Care** X **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.) X 2 Years X Preschool-Age School-Age

Get-Well Evening Care Special Needs

SCHEDULE: Year-round X School-Year Summer Only

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General	0	5	40	0	45
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

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

Licensing Consultant: Becky Frost **Date:** 12-16-2024

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

N/A

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

On 12/03/24 I made an unannounced licensing visit to Farmstead Preschool in Cedar Falls. I met with Stephanie Hansen, the director and a teacher. Ms. Hansen has been with Farmstead Preschool since August 1998, and she has been the director for twenty years. She has a BA in early childhood and elementary education from the University of Northern Iowa. Susan Flack is an assistant teacher and the office administrator. Ms. Flack has been employed with the program since 2012. There are seven staff members employed by the center and there is also a caretaker for the animals, Harold Runkle. The program has substitutes available.

Farmstead Preschool is in a free-standing building on a farm in rural Cedar Falls. It was started in January 1989. The preschool operates a program for two and one-half and three-year-old children, referred to as Farm Friends. The Farm Friends meet on Wednesday and Friday from 9:00-11:30 am. There is a program for children ages three through five-years-old that meets Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00-11:30 am or 12:30-3:00 pm. The program offers a five-day morning program from 9:00-11:30 am for children who will be attending Kindergarten next year. The Pre-K children who attend the Monday, Tuesday and Thursday afternoon class can also attend Wednesday and Friday from 9:00-11:30 am to attend a five-day program. There are currently 76 children enrolled.

The program also offers a three-week summer program for children ages three to six-years-old from 9:00-11:30 am.

The teachers are Stephanie Hansen, Deborah Ackerson, Tara Wilson, Jana Bailey, Nichole Morgan, Sarah Mott and Susan Flack.

The program operates out of two rooms. An inspection of each room was completed. Windows provide some natural lighting and artificial lighting is also used. The rooms are decorated with pictures of the children, 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 is an area for circle time in the front room. All the children from both classrooms join for circle time.

The centers observed on the day of the licensing visit include library, Lego/blocks, table toys, games, puzzles, transportation, play dough, art, dramatic play, listening, writing, math, science/discovery, woodworking, 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 were easily accessible to the children. Ms. Hansen stated they rotate the materials at the centers each month.

There are two bathrooms located in the front room of the program. Each has one toilet and one sink and handwashing procedures were posted. Diaper changing procedures were posted in this area as well. A mat is used to change diapers if necessary. There is also a bathroom located in the back room with one toilet and one sink. Handwashing procedures were posted. A mural of the farm animals at Farmstead Preschool is painted in the back bathroom.

The preschool is a Christian program in a farm atmosphere. The preschool has a pony, chickens, sheep, a cat and a bunny.

The animals are cared for by a farmer, Harold Runkle, hired by the preschool. The children have daily contact with the animals. Veterinary records are available at the preschool and the veterinarian visits the center twice each year to exam the animals. They also have animals visit the program, such as a calf or piglet. This preschool offers a unique experience to the children and a unique learning environment.

The program uses a variety or resources to develop their lesson plans. The program is Christian based. Teachers plan activities based on monthly themes. Newsletters are sent home to parents each month to keep them informed. They also focus on a letter, color and shape. The curriculum is based off the Iowa Early Learning Standards and the Cedar Falls School System standards. The teachers rotate the lead position. Each teacher is a lead for a week at a time. Parent-teacher conferences are offered twice each year, October and March.

A phone with emergency numbers was in the office and in each of the rooms. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and evacuation diagrams were posted by the main program doors and outdoor exits throughout the program. A daily schedule was posted and lesson plans were available for review.

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. I reviewed documentation of monthly playground inspections. A radon test was completed in March 2024 and is good for two years. Results were within EPA guidelines. The fuel burning inspection was completed and no concerns were noted. The program completes monthly water tests since it is in a rural area and no concerns are noted. A carbon monoxide detector was on site and located in the front room on the north wall and in the back room on the south wall. Outlets were protected. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 04/24/24.

The program is not on the Child and Adult care Food Program (CACFP) but follows the standards. Both morning and afternoon snacks are provided for the children by the parents and documented as they are brought in on a calendar. Snack suggestions are provided to parents in the handbook. Snack calendars were posted. The preschool is prepared to supplement the snack if it does not meet the CACFP standards. There are two kitchenette areas in the preschool. One is in the front area and one is in the back room. There is a refrigerator in each area and thermometers were present. Disposable products are used so there is minimal dishwashing required. There is a sink located in each area and the three-step method is used to wash dishes. Snacks were stored according to NHSPS guidelines. Allergies were posted in the kitchen area.

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

The parent information is on the office door at the front of the center and on a bulletin board inside the back classroom. 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 play area consists of climbing equipment, swings and slides. There is also a sandbox and an area for riding toys. Helmets are available. There is a digging apparatus and a chalkboard. Shade is provided by several trees. The preschool utilizes pea gravel and rubber mulch as surface cushioning. There are also mats under the swings. There is a picnic table and a bench. The program expanded their playground area. Ms. Hansen and Ms. Flack state the children love the real grass and they love to run and kick balls. They offer a natural space and climbing equipment.

Staff and children files were reviewed at the time of the licensing visit. I reviewed ten children files. They were in great condition.

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 are experienced and have worked together as a team for a long time. The day of the visit they were assisting children in making Christmas crafts. They came together for group time and Ms. Hansen read the children a book. She was expressive and made the story fun. Staff members sang directions to the children as they sat on the rug. The children were excited and responded well to the teachers. Staff members had terrific interaction with the children. They interacted at their level and provided the children with praise. They were enthusiastic and it is obvious how much they enjoy teaching the children. They kept the children actively engaged and offered them choices. Christmas music was playing in both rooms. The children clearly enjoyed their time at the program.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

Ms. Hansen states she has to mention every year that the staff longevity is amazing.

Ms. Hansen states they have a great group of children and the relationship between the children and staff members is

obvious. They give each other hugs and have a true connection.

Ms. Flack states the staff members have good teamwork and they know what to expect from one another. All the staff members are involved in every aspect of the classrooms.

Ms. Flack states the animals are a great addition to the program and the children love them.

Ms. Hansen states interaction with the animals teach the children kindness, gentle touches and being kind to things other than their family and friends.

Ms. Ackerson states all the staff members are willing to jump in and help.

Ms. Ackerson states they work as a team and the children see them working together.

Ms. Ackerson states the children feel this is a safe place for them and as a group they are a family.

The program does take field trips to the pumpkin farm in the fall and the library in the spring. The parents join them and drive their own children.

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.

*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.