Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Bright Futures Child Care Center

Provider No.: 52974

Address: 1310 West 1st Street, Vinton, IA, 52349

County: Benton

Director's Name: Bree Hepker & Molly Stark

On-Site Supervisor: Veronica "Roni" Nelson

Phone Number: 3194724840

E-Mail: BrightFuturesCCC25@gmail.com

HHS Visit Date: 08/10/2026

Licensing Period: 09/02/2025 to 09/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 12/23/2024

Comments: Compliance on 02/11/25

Report Visit Type:

- [ ] PTO
- [X] Licensing Visit
- [ ] Drop In
- [ ] Administrative Change

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

Quality Rating: 1

- [ ] Accrediation

Program Duration:

- [X] Year-Round
- [ ] School Year
- [ ] Summer Only

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HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Tuesday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Wednesday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Thursday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Friday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	24	14	16	6	60
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

On 08/10/26 I made an unannounced off year licensing visit to Bright Futures Child Care Center, Inc. in Vinton. I met with Veronica “Roni” Nelson, the on-site supervisor. Ms. Nelson has over seven years of experience working in childcare centers. Bree Hepker and Molly Stark are the owners and co-directors. Ms. Hepker has an AA in early childhood education and several years of experience working with children. Ms. Stark has an AA in business management and several years of experience working with children. The center employs sixteen staff members.

Ms. Hepker and Ms. Stark also own Early Beginnings Atkins Inc in Atkins. In addition, Ms. Hepker owns Early Beginnings Inc. in Van Horne.

Bright Futures Child Care Center, Inc. was given permission to open on 09/02/25. Ms. Hepker and Ms. Stark purchased Vinton Early Learning Center and the center was able to continue care without interruption to the families they serve. The staff members remained with the center. The center is open Monday through Friday from 6:30 am until 6:00 pm. t serves infants through school-aged children. There are currently 42 children enrolled.

The center operates out of the following rooms: infant room, 6 weeks until 12 months (Seedlings), toddler room/one-year-olds (Sprouts), two-year-olds (Buds), and three and four-year-olds and school age children (Evergreens). They use one room as a gross motor room. There is an additional room that is currently not being used. 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. Several rooms had pictures of the children.

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The centers observed on the day of the licensing visit include library, blocks/Legos, magnets, table toys, games, puzzles, transportation, Play-Doh, woodworking, listening, technology, art, dramatic play, writing, math, science/discovery, 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.

A staff purse was observed on the counter in one classroom. All personal items must be stored out of the reach of children.

They use the Lilio Learning Curriculum. The curriculum is broken down for ages 0-3 and for ages 3-5. Each day the curriculum breaks down activities for literacy, discovery (math, science, social studies, social/emotional), and sensory/fine and gross motor. There is a book that comes with the curriculum that outlines activities for each category. Lesson plans are based on themes that last two weeks. Lesson plans were available for review in each room.

The center uses the Brightwheel app to complete daily sheets for the children under the age of two. The Brightwheel app does not have an area to document the children's mood, which is required. I recommend you document their mood under the notes section. Brightwheel is also used to communicate with all families in the center.

The rooms were in ratio the day of my visit.

There was a phone with emergency numbers and the center's address and phone number in each classroom and in the kitchen. Emergency numbers are located on the emergency evacuation diagrams. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and evacuation diagrams were posted by all the main program doors and outdoor exits in 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.

The radon test was completed in December 2024 and is good for five years. Results were within EPA guidelines.

The annual fuel burning inspection was completed and no concerns were noted. Carbon monoxide detectors are included in the fire safety system located on the ceiling in each classroom. There is also a carbon monoxide detector in the reception area. Outlets were protected. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 12/23/24, with compliance on 02/11/25.

The center participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The program provides breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. All food is prepared on site. Jamie Halbfass is the cook. The center uses a four week rotation of menus. Dishes are returned to the kitchen and put through the industrial dishwasher to be cleaned and sanitized. There are also sinks available to use the three-step method.

The kitchen was observed to be clean and organized. There are two refrigerators and an upright freezer. There were thermometers present. Food items were stored according to NHSPS guidelines. Menus and allergies were posted. There is also a refrigerator in the infant room and thermometers were present.

The center provides one brand of formula, jar food and cereal for the infants. Parents bring their own food for the infants if they want a different brand. Bottles are made in the classroom and are also cleaned and sanitized in the classroom.

The center uses Purell Food Service Surface Sanitizer to sanitize the food tables and Oxivir Tb to disinfect the changing tables. This has a one minute dwell time.

I discussed or observed diaper changes with staff members and proper procedures are being followed in most rooms. In the infant room, the staff member did not wash the child's hands. This was corrected after I talked with her about it and it will not be cited.

There are multiple sinks, toilets and changing tables in the center. Handwashing and diaper changing procedures were posted in all locations.

The center uses cribs in the infant room and cots are used to nap for the children who are one year old and older.

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

There are three fenced in playground areas, but only two of the areas are being used. The two areas being used are spacious. The space on the north side of the building is used for toddlers and two-year-old children. They are scheduled to use the space at different times. Rubber mulch is used for surface cushioning. There is a slide for the children. There are a shade structure and trees available for shade. There are riding and pushing toys, a sandbox, playhouse, bike path and a picnic table for the children to rest.

The playground on the south side of the building is used for the older children. There are trees and shade structures for shade. This area has a bike path, playhouse, art center, sandbox, and basketball hoops. There is a piece of climbing equipment with slides and rubber mulch is used for fall surfacing.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

Staff members provide a fun and educational environment for the children. They were playing child friendly music in the classrooms. They took the time to take the children outside to enjoy the nice weather. When in the classroom, the staff members were observed interacting at the same level as the children, by sitting on the floor or in chairs next to the children. Staff members offered the children choices and in one classroom the staff member used a craft to talk with the children about colors and shapes. They were flexible with their schedule to meet the developmental needs of the children. I observed staff members to be nurturing; they provide the children with hugs and hold them on their laps. Staff members were great at multi-tasking. They talked with the children about sharing.

Ms. Nelson states the center has a good group of teachers, which helps with enrollment.

Ms. Nelson states their staff members are professional and they build relationships with the children and families.

Ms. Nelson states the center has been running more smoothly over the last year since they have been under new ownership.

The program is a bus stop for the local schools and for one child on an IEP who attends school outside of the Vinton.

The center is in a secure building and there are cameras in the classrooms and on the playground that can record.

The center works with Grant Wood AEA, Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R), Early Access and CART (Childcare Alliance Response Team).

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

There are no violations.

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

N/A

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

A full license is issued for the remainder of the licensing period. All HHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period.

Targeted Assessment: Behavior Management:
I discussed with Ms. Nelson her oversight of behavior management related to helping childcare staff: 1) Understand expectations, 2) managing frustrations, 3) monitor performance. Ms. Nelson states they discuss with new staff members during on-boarding how to handle frustrations and behavior management concerns. The center has professional

development days and they have talked with staff members at meetings about how to manage feelings and relax. She states Grantwood AEA came and did a training called, “Improving Skills For Early Childhood Caregivers”. She states it was a helpful and good training. Ms. Nelson states they have two teachers in each room for support and this allows staff members to pass the teaching on to the second staff member if they become frustrated or overwhelmed. It allows a staff member to step out and take a break to calm down and they know they can call administrators for help. She states staff members are good at asking for help.

Ms. Nelson states to monitor the situation she spends time in each of the classrooms throughout the week and usually daily. Staff members are good at reporting concerns for a child’s behavior or if they witness a staff member becoming frustrated. She can also hear the rooms from the reception area and she has access to cameras if necessary.

Date: 08/12/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Becky Frost

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**.