Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Exploration & Learning Station

Provider No.: 51214

Address: 116 N Division ST, Stuart, IA, 50250

County: Guthrie

Director's Name: Alicia Geil

On-Site Supervisor: Stephanie Brown

Phone Number: 5155231946

E-Mail: explorationlearningstation@gmail.com

HHS Visit Date: 01/27/2026

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

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 05/20/2024

Comments: State Fire Marshal inspections are due at least every three years.

Report Visit Type:

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

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

Quality Rating: 4

- [ ] 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
- [ ] School Age
- [ ] All Ages

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	24	13	45	0	82
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

An off-year inspection was conducted on 1/27/26. The owner/director was present throughout the visit.

All areas of the program were observed. These areas observed consisted of classroom observations and activities, ratios, nutritional practices, health and safety practices, playground observation, field trip and transportation practices, and administrative review.

Exploration and Learning Station is a center in Stuart, IA that was given permission to open on 10/12/20. The center operates in three buildings in the same vicinity (campus definition). The center serves children who are six weeks in age through roughly five years in age. The center uses the Creative Learning Curriculum in their teaching of children. There are two open areas in the first building, three classrooms in the second building, and one classroom in the third building. Infant capacity is 24 children. Two year old capacity is 13 children. Preschool capacity is 30 children. The third building has a capacity of 15 children which is currently being used for preschool. Total capacity is 82. There are currently 72 children enrolled.

The owner/director of the center is Alicia Geil. Alicia has a Master's degree in Special Education and a Bachelor's degree in K-6th Teaching. Alicia has past experience working in the school setting as a teacher as well as running her own registered in-home daycare in the past. The on-site supervisor is Stephanie Brown. Stephanie is and has taken a number of professional development training and has past experience working in child care to meet the requirements for on-site supervisor.

During the visit, children in the first building were observed washing their hands and engaged in free-choice play at the

different learning stations set up on the classrooms. Staff were assisting children with hand washing and sitting on the floor engaged with children. In the second building, staff were again observed sitting on the floor and engaged with children as they played with different learning stations made available to them. A few children were napping. In the third building, children were again observed washing their hands. Children were also engaged in free-choice play and were sitting at child-size tables and chairs doing different art activities. Children and staff gave specific answers as to where they relocate to for monthly fire and tornado drills. Toys and other equipment are being cleaned and sanitized daily per staff.

NUTRITION: The center serves breakfast, lunch, and a PM snack. All food items were CACFP credible. All food storage was sufficient.

TRANSPORTATION/FIELD TRIPS: The center has two passenger vans. Children two and older are eligible for field trips. The center provides booster seats for children. Children's emergency contacts and a first-aid kit are taken along for all transportation needs. Regular maintenance is performed on the vans.

PLAYGROUND: The center has two playground areas. These areas were briefly observed and no issues were noted with either playground area.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

This is a center that meets a need in the community. Enrollment has increased over the past year.

The director has past experience working in child care and is organized.

The center uses the Bright Wheel online application for increased communication with parents. Parent Teacher Conferences are also held in the Spring.

The center works with CCR&R, their CCNC, AEA, and First Children's Finance on a regular basis.

Good child/staff interactions were again observed throughout the visit.

The owner stated she believes she has a good staff and that staff work well with each other. There is a good mix of tenured and newer staff.

Staff are eligible for certain benefits.

The center has good community partnerships.

The center participates in IQ4K (which is a voluntary program based on best practice).

Staff typically get more professional development training hours than what is minimally required annually.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

One child bottle wasn't labeled.

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

N/A.

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

Radon testing was last conducted 12/30/22 - 1/3/23 in one building and 7/3/25 - 7/6/25 in the other two buildings. All classrooms came back with radon levels below the 4.0 cutoff. Because levels were below 4.0, the center can move to testing for radon at least every five years now. So long as radon levels remain below 4.0, they can remain on a five year plan. If at the next testing, levels in any classroom come back 4.0 or higher, the center will have to have a mitigation plan, retest, and at least temporarily move back to testing every two years.

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The annual furnace inspection on the buildings was last completed 11/6/25.

There is a built in carbon monoxide detector in the first building. The second and third buildings have carbon monoxide detectors in place.

It appears that all staff have I - Power profiles and training is being uploaded to profiles.

As mentioned at last year's inspection, this consultant's phone number will need to be changed in the center's written Emergency Preparedness Plan.

It was noted that the center is in the early stages of getting a new building where they can all be combined. The center also plans to switch to being a non-profit at that time.

Date: 01/27/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Nate Knepper

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**.