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

Name of Center: Valor & Victory Academy **Enrollment:** 70 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 52179

Street: 1369 HWY 1 **City:** Kalona Iowa **Zip** 52247 **County:** Washington

Mailing Address: 1369 HWY 1, Kalona, IA, 52247

Director's Name: Sophia Nunez **Phone Number:** 319-656-5437

On-Site Supervisor(s): Ciarra Barthelman **E-Mail:** valor_victory@outlook.com

Date(s) of Visit: 06-30-2025

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

LICENSING VISITS

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

Signed Application (470-0722) Received X **Yes** **No** **NA** **Date Signed:** 04-28-2025

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

Date Inspected: 07-24-2025

Comments : due every three years completed by State Fire Marshal Damien Dawson, this report was held until Inspector Dawson emailed the approved inspection to HHS on 7/28/25

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

Get-Well Evening Care X 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	17	10	10	30	67
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 06-01-2025 to 06-01-2027
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Jill Seibert **Date:** 07-28-2025

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

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

Valor and Victory Academy is located in a split-level, wood frame building with a built on one story attachment. It is located on Highway 1 south of Kalona. The new program opened in 2023. The center provides full day childcare services to children ages six weeks through school age. The center also offers an early childhood educational program for preschool age children during the school year. The center is owned, operated, and directed by Ciarra Barthelman and Sophia Nunez. Ms. Nunez was a preschool teacher for 8 years and an office administrator in another program for a year. Ms. Barthelman has held various positions in childcare centers for ten years. She has at least two years completed toward a four-year degree at Kirkwood Community College in ECE. Prior to this business opening another licensed childcare center existed. The former owner of this childcare, Ms. Kim Barthelman remains employed at the new center. She has a National Administrator Credential and 30 years of experience in childcare centers. She was in ratio the day of the visit and provides consultation. The previous center was licensed since 1999. Several employees from the previous center remain at the new center.

On 6/30/25 I made an unannounced licensing visit to Valor and Victory Academy and met with directors and staff members. At the time of the visit, staff was actively engaged in providing the summer childcare program to the children. The building consists of a lower level serving infants and 1–2-year-old children. This area also has a kitchen and a restroom. for staff. Upstairs has areas for 2- to 4-year-old children. A restroom with small toilets is on one side of this space. A large school age room is on the back of the building. It is an open area and has two attached restrooms. This room has direct access to the outdoors. The rooms can be interchangeable as needed.

The former owner qualifies as onsite supervisor. Other candidates are being considered for the OSS position. The new Directors understand if a Director or OSS are not present a designated person in charge must be present.

The visit consisted of classroom observations and activities, ratios, nutritional practices, health and safety practices, playground observation, field trip and transportation practices, and administrative review and supervision and ratio.

Center Nutrition:

The program will be on the CACFP program. The kitchen was clean during the visit. Thermometers were in each refrigeration/freezer unit. Open food was stored in sealed containers. No food was stored on the floor. Menus were posted. Food is also stored in the classrooms. All were in sealed containers.

Food allergies have diet modification sheets and food allergy action plans. We discussed some of the items served such as tater tots may not meet CACFP guidelines. They are no longer serving prepackaged processed foods per the Director on 8/29/24.

Center Health and Safety:

HHS discussed supervision at length with the new program. It was discussed children must be supervised at all times and

may not leave the classroom unattended or use the restroom together simultaneously. We discussed several strategies for improving supervision practices. Active supervision was being practiced during the visit. We discussed that restroom/ hand washing practices should be more defined so that children are not going in together unnoticed. We discussed different routines that they will try to make restroom routines more orderly.

Labeled first aid kits are on both floors and contain sufficient items to provide basic first aid. Medications are stored out of the reach of children. Prescribed medications have pharmacy labels intact. Emergency medications should be kept in the room with the child inaccessible to children but easily accessed by staff in case of an emergency. They accompany children outdoors.

Radon testing is due every 5 years and should be done in winter months when the ground is frozen. The last test was conducted within the last 4 years with a rate below 4 pciL. Carbon monoxide detectors are present on both floors. All cabinetry that could pose as toppling hazards are anchored to the wall. All cabinetry is now secured. We discussed ventilation should be assisted by opening windows when possible. The Director reported on 8/29/24 the program has been opening windows throughout the summer to assist with ventilation. We discussed the ducts should be cleaned as well on a routine basis. Since last year the outside of the ducts have been added to the cleaning schedule. The filters have also been changed. Ventilation had improved during this visit. It is recommended the duct system be cleaned as recommended by the manufacturer.. We discussed cleaning must be conducted daily. Schedules should be followed. We discussed the fish tank must be cleaned regularly as well. It was clean the day of the visit, so was added to the cleaning list.

Tornado and fire drills had been conducted and documented monthly.

The center does not contain lead based paint.

The center has two restrooms upstairs making the capacity for the school age room 30. Each child should have at least 35 square feet indoors.

The owners and CCNC Krana went through all child files to ensure no children in the program had allergies. Any allergy must have an allergy action plan present.

Center Outdoor Play Area:

The center has two play areas. One in the front of the building for younger children and one in the back of the building for older children. New fencing has been added and part of the old fencing removed. Outdoor play inspections have been conducted and documented monthly. Climbing structures are present with no hazards noted. Fall surfacing (foam/rubber tiles) were replaced this year. A first aid kit is taken outdoors. The Child Care Weather Watch is utilized if outdoor play is questionable due to varying weather conditions. A shade structure has been added to the front play area.

Playground inspections will be conducted monthly. Children outdoors must have at least 75 square feet each for gross motor play.

The program has water activities in the grass in summer months.

Center Administration:

The Center has a parent and staff handbook containing all required policies. The Director tracks staff information on a tracking sheet including SING checks and fingerprint results, This will be reviewed annually. Child file information should be updated annually including updated physicals, emergency contacts, dental and medical information, field trip and pick up authorizations.

Lesson plans should be utilized daily. This has been a topic of discussion in the past with the former program. On several visits the school age room has been somewhat
chaotic and loud. This has transitioned to the new center since former staff and children are present in the new center. CCR&R is available to help with implementing age appropriate curriculum, schedules and routines. DHS recommends the Director invite CCR&R to conduct observation of the classrooms and give recommendations. This occurred on 6/27/23.

The center has all required postings including Mandatory Reporter information, No Smoking signage, maps of the building for emergency evacuation. The center license and DHS Consultant contact information is also posted for parents to see.

All center staff were trained on the center Emergency Preparedness Plan and signed and dated acknowledgement of such on 6/24/22. It is due annually.

The center has written several incident reports since opening regarding child behaviors and minor incident and injuries. The center is seeking assistance from CCR&R regarding difficult child behaviors.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The new owners are willing to try new strategies.

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

1. 109.9(2)h: Signed and dated valid Certificate of Immunization, Certificate of Immunization Exemption, or Provisional Certificate of Immunization, provided by the department must be on file for each child enrolled as required by Iowa Administrative Code 641—7.

109.9(2)i: Preschool (for children five years and younger not enrolled in school): Physical exam report submitted within 30 days of admission, was obtained no more than 12 months prior to admission, is signed by a licensed MD, DO, Chiropractor, PA, or ARNP, and contains health history; present health status including allergies, medications, and acute/chronic conditions; and recommendations for continued care if necessary.

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.

Several children did not have either updated physicals, immunization certificates and 5 were missing dental information. The Directors are tracking all child files and working with parents to ensure updates are made.

2. 109.10(13)c: Center shall develop procedures for annual staff and volunteer training on emergency plans. The Directors agree to train staff on the EPP and have them sign and date acknowledgement of such.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based upon this review, it is recommended that this center begin in Full licensing status. The center is directed to correct the items listed in Section IV. The director gave me a verbal commitment that the noted rule violations would be promptly corrected. It is important to note, all HHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period. Both Directors are engaged with services provided from IDPH and CCR&R.

HHS encourages you to contact your local nurse consultant. Child Care Nurse Consultants work with child care and early education businesses. Businesses may call or send questions to a child care nurse consultant about health and safety policies, health programs, health of personnel, and specific child health or safety issues. Toni Krana is the Child Care Nurse Consultant for the program. CCNC Krana assisted the facility in the spring with medication management, emergency medication, medication policies and child files. She also gave the program items to update first aid kits. She provided consultation on cleaning and schedules. She also assessed the outdoor play area.

CCNC Krana provided the following the past year: 11/24/24 Information on kid's size toilet seats and information on infants food that could be provided.
01/21/25 CPR resources provided for the Washington area.
05/07/2025 Onsite visit did walk through of center any hazards that were noticed were corrected at that time, did playground inspection 1 gate was in need of repair parts were already on order at that time.
06/11/2025 Information on Employee Physical Requirements and correct form provided

HHS encourages you to contact Child Care Resource and Referral. They offer centers assistance with meeting the DHS regulations, QRS, infant/toddler concerns, room arrangement and environment, developmental concerns, Best Practice information, CDA assistance, or any questions or concerns you may have. Please visit the following website to find out who your consultant is: http://www.iowaccrr.org/who_we_are/region_5/ Tabitha Copeland is the child care consultant for this program. She met with the Directors on 6/27/23 and send the following email afterwards, "
Hello,
Meeting today with Sophia and Ciarra the following things were discussed. Please let me know if I missed something or there are questions.

Supervision: Included a handout that can help staff understand basic supervision requirements (attached). We spoke about the use of name to face roll call and the use of direct supervision practices.
Sophia and Ciarra stated they have started to implement direct care in school age room and plan to in the other rooms. We discussed videos that could help directors and staff find a way to use direct care practices effectively for them. Please see below for those.

Supervision Videos
Supervision: What's Required? This video provides great examples of different way staff can keep track of the total number of children and staff in a classroom at all times as well as which children are assigned to which teacher.
Supervision: What's the count? When, how and why children should be counted
Supervision: Positioning- Where do I Stand? Looking at 'blind spots' in a child care classroom and outdoors, where to stand to be able to see/hear all children

Ratios: Did signs for each room with capacity and ratios for staff and visitors. Discussed using a white board or other visual in each room to let staff and visitors see the total number of children present and who they are assigned to for the day for direct care to assist in maintaining ratios and supervision. Explanation of ratios can be found in COMM 204 in several places with the general Ratio rules being found on pages 59-61. Other ratios and those on infant found under those sections. Please reach out for clarification as needed. Rooms and center appeared to be in ratio at the time of my visit.

Helpful video on Ratios below:
Supervision: Ratios Are Relevant The importance of child-adult ratio and ways to ensure these are maintained
Supervising Children in Child Care Centers Additional techniques and ideas to maintain ratio and constant supervision including during transition

Curriculum: Requirements for Curriculum in Iowa can be found in COMM 204 on page 102 and go as follows.
Activities : The center shall have a written curriculum or program structure that uses developmentally appropriate practices and a written program of activities planned according to the developmental level of the children. The center shall post a schedule of the program in a visible place. The child care program shall complement but not duplicate the school curriculum. The program shall be designed to provide children with: a. A curriculum or program of activities that promotes self-esteem and positive self-image; social interaction; self-expression and communication skills; creative expression; and problem-solving skills. b. A balance of active and quiet activities; individual and group activities; indoor and outdoor activities; and staff-initiated and child-initiated activities. c. Activities which promote both gross and fine motor development. d. Experiences in harmony with the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of the children. e. A supervised nap or quiet time for all children under the age of six not enrolled in school who are present at the center for five or more hours

Discussed with Sophia and Ciarra curriculum and schedules for activities. Attached are some very basic examples for each age group. While curriculum does not need to be bought it does need to, meet HHS requirements. I have attached some examples of curriculum but I think taking the time to develop a daily schedule and routine would benefit your use of it greatly. We discussed getting together after we get things sorted for HHS to discuss that but below are some video you might find helpful. You were also going to send me a picture of the classrooms you want social stories made for. Also, color coding your materials for the sake of rotation and curriculum was something you were going to look into. We will continue to work in this area after main concerns are addressed. See below for some videos on how routines and schedules can be used to help with running curriculum effectively in the classroom.

Schedule and Routine videos
Schedules and Routines How schedules and routines help to promote children's learning and keep the day on track while minimizing behavior issues. Different ideas around creating a visual daily classroom schedule that children can learn to follow.
Daily Schedule Review Review of visual daily schedule by turning cards over when an area is complete

I would like to stop by and help you work out the kinks of the new things you are wanting to try and will be available the week of July 24 anytime that works for you. Please let me know a date and time.

2-5-25 sent safe sleep training info for general purposes
2-13-25 volunteer requirements sent
2-20-25 on-site to observe 1's room biting, suggested looking at policy and adding more one on one support to that child till they gain verbal skills that would hopefully help the issue, gave several resources.
4-15-25 HHS visit get ready for paperwork and walk through.
5-13-25 onsite with Jodi to measure rooms for licensing purposes
May through present general emails and/or visits to support goal of being IQ4K level 1 rated

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It is evident through the low number of violations new administration have sought counsel with resources. This is duly noted.

*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.