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

Name of Center: Stratford Early Learning Center **Enrollment:** 43 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 16109

Street: 1000 Shakespeare AVE **City:** Stratford Iowa **Zip** 50249 **County:** Hamilton

Mailing Address: PO Box 190, Stratford, IA, 50249

Director's Name: Jenna Mathes **Phone Number:** 515-838-2204

On-Site Supervisor(s): **E-Mail:** jmathes@stratford.k12.ia.us

Date(s) of Visit: 06-07-2024

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

LICENSING VISITS

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

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

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

Date Inspected: 05-26-2023

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 X School-Age

Get-Well Evening Care 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	12	8	20	20	60
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 08-01-2023 to 08-01-2025
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Raymond Salsbury **Date:** 06-14-2024

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

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

An unannounced annual visit was made to the Stratford Early Learning Center on 06-07-24 where I met with the center director Jenna Mathes became the director of this program in March 2024 and is well qualified for the position based on her experience and training in early childhood care. The program is owned and overseen by the school and has offered a preschool wrap around program that operates in the school building during the school year. The program serves infants through school age children. There are approximately 43 children enrolled though not all attend at any given time and the numbers reflect the open nature of the after school program that is available. There are 13 employees in the main daycare program. All aspects of the program were reviewed during this visit with the exception of the preschool wrap around program which was not in session.

The general design and layout of the center and classrooms remains the same as in prior reports. The center has 3 distinct classrooms with one room for infants, toddlers, and the preschool/school age children. The center also has a larger open central area that is used for meal service and provides additional space for the school age and preschool children. It is noted that the space used for the after school program makes use of space in the school cafeteria, gymnasium, and art room. Each classroom was observed to be in good repair with only a few minor issues related to maintenance such as a screw attaching a mirror to the wall in the infant room backing out, and paint/drywall damage but nothing that rose to the level of being an immediate safety concern. Each classroom has direct secondary egress to the outdoors. All exits were clear of obstruction and opened easily and freely. The infant room does make use of evacuation cribs which were also maintained clear of obstruction. A mobile fence system has been placed in the infant room to separate the cribs from the main programming area. During the visit an employee was observed to step over the barrier as it does not have an established entry point/gate. While centers can use mobile barriers to separate programming spaces staff shall not step over those barriers as it creates a significant tripping hazard. The center makes use of an interior bathroom for emergency tornado shelter. Each classroom has windows along the exterior walls that provide ample natural light, a view of the outdoors, and ventilation. Each room has elevated changing stations. Toilets are located off a corridor from the main commons area. Each classroom has sinks available in the classroom space to facilitate hand washing. The layout of each room is generally open with activity centers created through the placement of shelves, furniture, and play structures. The arrangement was such that it did not create any blind areas.

Activity centers generally include large/small manipulatives, books, art/crafts in all rooms, and adds dramatic play, media, games/puzzles, and group learning in older age group classrooms. Each room had a good variety of toys and materials that were observed to be in good repair and generally appropriate to the ages of the children present though there were a couple toys with small parts which should be moved to a classroom with children 3 years of age or older. Each classroom had a copy of the daily schedule and planned curriculum posted. The center does have a more relaxed approach to curriculum planning during the summer with engaging in walks and other off site activities, and longer periods of self directed outdoor play. Good interactions were observed with the staff being engaged with the children playing with them, and attending to their needs. Ratio was maintained as required in each classroom. The center does use positive behavior management techniques such as routines, reminders, and redirection. All staff were observed to use calm tones and appropriate positive language when speaking to children.

Good health and safety policies were generally observed during the visit. I was able to observe a diaper change while at the center and the required procedures were followed though staff did not deglove between handling soiled and clean items, and held a child while treating the surface with chemical cleaners. Good storage practices were in place with regard to medications, chemical cleaners, first aid kits, and personal items that may contain materials that could be a safety risk to children. The center has a first aid kit that contains materials necessary to address most common first aid needs. Good safe sleep practices were observed for infants under 1 year of age. Good hand washing practices were generally observed but it was observed that one group of children were directed to wait for their peers and many sat on the floor while waiting thus negating the benefit of washing prior to lunch service.

Meals are generally prepared by the school and transported to the center in hot/cold holding containers during the school year. During the summer and non-school days the program does it's own meal preparation. The center does have a small kitchen area where meals are prepared. A menu is posted and the meal served on the day of my visit was consistent with the planned menu. While the staff did not eat with the children supervision was provided at the tables. Meals were pre-portioned for the children and good food handling practices were observed with the staff wearing food service gloves, and using measured scoops to ensure each child received a full portion. Good food storage practices were observed. The kitchen was clean with no evidence of insect or rodent infestation.

The center has a small toddler playground, and also makes use of the school playground. Wood chips are used for fall surfacing in both areas where there are climbing structures and a good depth of material was present. The equipment was in good repair and those elements identified in the prior report as having served their useful life had been removed. Both playgrounds are enclosed by fencing and a fence also separates the two playgrounds. Large mature trees provide shade on both playgrounds.

In reviewing administrative records all required notices were posted in an area that was readily visible and accessible to parents and visitors. The center has implemented the use of the Playground, electronic communication application and Jenna stated that some data such as parental contact information is maintained in that system, but other information such as child physicals are maintained in hard copy files. Jenna did acknowledge that she is still working to input information and update files and physicals for the children. In reviewing staff files the center is using a hard copy file system. Again Jenna acknowledged that the files were not up to date and she was in the process of reviewing them for needed information. Several files were randomly selected for review and each was found to need at least one updated element such as physical, renewed background check, and training. The required inspection logs and certificates for Radon and Monthly playground inspections were available and current. The Fuel Burning Appliances inspection could not be found on the day of my visit and as a reminder all fuel burning appliances must be inspected annually to ensure that they are free of gas and carbon monoxide leaks. Fire and tornado drill logs had not been completed for April or May 2024 but Jenna stated they had been completed and were logged in a different calendar but had not yet been written on the form used to log drills..

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The center has been working to update equipment and materials as noted with removing items that had served their useful life on the playground. Jenna did state that the center is also looking at options for replacing the wood chips used for fall surfacing on the playground. Jenna stated that the center has applied for a Business Improvement Program grant.

The center is in the process of moving to an electronic file maintenance system which should help to improve the maintenance of files and current information.

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

109.6(6)c: Center repeats Iowa record checks at a minimum of every two years or when aware of additional child abuse or criminal history that occurs.

109.9(1)d: All files contain a pre-employment physical exam report completed within six months prior to hire and at least every three years. Physical exams shall be documented on form 470-5152, Child Care Provider Physical Examination Report.

109.9(1)e: All files contain documentation to indicate that ongoing staff training requirements are met, including current certifications in first aid/CPR and mandatory child abuse training.

109.9(4): Daily written records are maintained for each child under two years of age and include time periods slept, amount

of/time food consumed, time/irregularities of elimination patterns, general disposition, and general summary of activities.
-- Documentation of daily activities and disposition was not being maintained as required.

109.11(3)a: Center shall ensure that: Facility and premises are sanitary, safe, and hazard free. Adequate indoor and outdoor space is provided. The outdoor area shall include safe play equipment and area of shade. Sufficient space provided for dining. Sufficient lighting shall be provided. Sufficient ventilation. Sufficient heating. sufficient cooling. Sufficient bathroom and diapering facilities. Equipment, including kitchen appliances, are maintained so as not to result in burns, shock, or injury to children. Sanitation and safety procedures for the center are developed and implemented to reduce risk or injury or harm to children and reduce transmission of disease.
-- Staff shall not step over mobile barriers used to divide programming space(s).

109.11(7)c: All centers: Annual inspection prior to heating season of all fuel-burning appliances to reduce risk of carbon monoxide poisoning and shall install one carbon monoxide detector on each floor that conforms to UL Standard 2034.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

A full license will remain in effect at this time. Please provide a written response to the licensing consultant identifying a plan of action to correct and maintain those aspects cited as not meeting licensing standards and identifying an anticipated date of compliance. At least one visit will be made to the center during the next year.

*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.