

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

**Name of Center:** Hand in Hand-Bowman Woods **Enrollment:** 35 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 47188

**Street:** 151 Boyson RD NE **City:** Cedar Rapids **Iowa Zip** 52402 **County:** Linn

**Mailing Address:** 103 N Center Point RD, Hiawatha, IA, 52233

**Director's Name:** Kathy Pruitt **Phone Number:** 319-200-4840

**On-Site Supervisor(s):** Cassandra "Cassie" Himmelsbach **E-Mail:** hih@handinhandinc.com

**Date(s) of Visit:** 09-30-2020

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

**LICENSING VISITS**

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

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

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

**Date Inspected:** 10-20-2020

**Comments :**

**LICENSE TYPE:** X **Child Care** **Preschool (ages 3-5 meets three hours or less per day)**

**Financial Type:** X **Profit** **Non-Profit** NA

**Accreditation:** **Accredited** **NAEYC** **NSACA** **Other** X **NA**

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

**Get-Well** **Evening Care** **Special Needs**

**SCHEDULE:** X **Year-round** **School-Year** **Summer Only**

<b>HOURS:</b>	<u>Year-round</u>	<u>School-Year</u>	<u>Summer Only</u>		
<b>LICENSE CAPACITY</b>	<b>Infants</b>	<b>2 Years</b>	<b>Preschool</b>	<b>School-Age</b>	<b>Capacity</b>
General				65	65
Summer					0

**QRS Rating:** N/A

<b>RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:</b>	
X	<b>FULL</b> license from 05-01-2020 to 05-01-2022
	<b>PROVISIONAL</b> license from
	<b>DENIAL</b> of initial application
	<b>SUSPENSION</b> of license
	<b>REVOCACTION</b> of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons

Date: 10-22-2020

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

Not applicable.

### **II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:**

Hand in Hand has been in operation for over 18 years. Hand in Hand operates multiple programs throughout the community. Specifically, Hand in Hand - Bowman Woods is located inside Bowman Woods Elementary School which is part of the Linn Mar Community School District. Hand in Hand – Bowman Woods has been in operation since June, 2016. Hand in Hand - Linn Grove Elementary is a profit program which operates year-round Monday through Friday 6:30am to 6:00pm. The program serves school-age children. Current enrollment is 35.

Hand in Hand multi-site owner/director is Kathy Pruitt. Ms. Pruitt holds a degree in Early Childhood Education and Business Management. Ms. Pruitt has achieved the National Administrators Credential (NAC) and is a member of National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) as well as a member of the Cedar Rapids Association for the Education of Young Children (CRAEYC). Hand in Hand multi-site management personnel includes Ms. Sara Swestka who has been with Hand in Hand for over 18 years. Ms. Swestka holds her Bachelor of Art degree in Elementary Education and Early Childhood Education. Ms. Swestka has many years of experience working with children, continues to participate in much child development related training, and has achieved NAC. Hand in Hand multi-site school-age coordinator is Katie Little. Ms. Little has been with Hand in Hand since December, 2017. Ms. Little has a BA degree in nursing, an AA degree in marketing management, over 5 years of experience working with children, and continues to participate in much child development related training. Site specific on-site supervisor of Hand in Hand - Bowman Woods is Cassandra "Cassie" Himmelsbach. Ms. Himmelsbach has been an on-site supervisor since February, 2020. Ms. Himmelsbach has over 5 years of experience working with children and continues to participate in much child development related training.

On 9/30/2020, all program space was observed.

### **III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:**

Hand in Hand operates multiple sites throughout the community and has been in operation for over 18 years. Hand in Hand offers a variety of early learning/childcare programming options to help meet the needs of children and families throughout the community.

The philosophy of Hand in Hand is to "...offer a child-centered teaching technique, encouraging children to learn concepts and skills through self-discovery, while our teachers remain available to main the flow of the classroom and to assist children in their discoveries...we are dedicated teachers to helping each child reach his or her full potential in a nurturing, creative environment. Your child's comforts, needs and safety are always our number one priority..."

Hand in Hand has the following website for families and the community to learn more about their programs:  
<http://handinhandinc.com/>.

Hand in Hand has a history of participating in quality initiatives including a local quality initiative.

Ownership and management of Hand in Hand has remained consistent. This includes owner Ms. Pruitt, management

personnel Ms. Swestka, school-age coordinator Ms. Little, and site-specific supervisor Ms. Himmelsbach. Management is extremely organized, and in turn, the program operates smoothly. Hand in Hand has noteworthy systems of organization in place to help ensure administrative items are completed and maintained as required. Hand in Hand management team continues to be part of an online innovative national director social media group. Management has established an annual staff requirements calendar book with necessary forms, materials, and so on. Management also reported recently establishing a quarterly employee newsletter that includes helpful policy reminders and tips and classroom tools/resources.

Since the last monitoring visit, Hand in Hand has retained as well as hired some new staff. Management discussed being proud of their team of employees who have a strong work ethic, are willing to help out in various capacities as needed, foster a positive team spirit, and embrace the Hand in Hand business. Ms. Himmelsbach discussed the collaboration that is done among all Hand in Hand school-age sites that allows for a sharing of materials, curriculum, and ideas/planning. Ms. Himmelsbach referred to her team as "a great group of staff with the initiative to see something and just help out. They have good communication skills and are comfortable talking with parents..." Staff appreciation and recognition events are part of the program's operations.

Hand in Hand - Bowman Woods has a collaborative partnership with the school district. The school building and grounds are well-maintained. School custodial staff, school administration, school nurse, and school food service personnel help ensure the children's space is sanitary and hazard free each day. The school kitchen is inspected at least annually by the health department. There is an AED on-site. The program has regular access to the school gymnasium for large gross motor activities. It is important to note, the program was subject to the 8/10/2020 Derecho Storm. Swift immense clean-up efforts continue to be organized and completed so that the school and childcare are able to operate.

Since the last review, the program's primary space located in the school cafeteria underwent renovation and an expansion including the addition of a plumbed hand washing sink located in this area. Due to the renovation, Hand in Hand - Bowman Woods also gained access to a program designated storage/supply closet. Ms. Himmelsbach described their program's partnership with the school as "excellent" and acknowledged how the school administration has really been assisting their operations during the pandemic.

Hand in Hand - Bowman Woods continues efforts at optimal communication between the program/staff and families. The program has an organized parent-staff/program information center, offers regular program newsletters, utilizes technological communication resources, and supports family programming activities. Hand in Hand - Bowman Woods continues to offer a character counts curriculum, a reading incentive program called "Reading Rainbow", and homework time/assistance. The current pandemic was discussed. Ms. Himmelsbach talked about how their program has been cleverly planning and modifying curriculum to help ensure children's activities and learning are still happening. Ms. Himmelsbach reported increased opportunities for small group work as well as individual learning.

Hand in Hand collaborates well with many community partners including local small businesses, health department, and other childcare owners/directors (locally and nationally).

Hand in Hand – Bowman Woods supports a “safe shoe” policy to encourage ease of play.

Staff discussed the program's daily health screening policies and procedures. Staff were observed encouraging and engaging in hand washing at all levels. Staff encouraged children to "catch coughs" and "catch sneezes" in elbows. The program has policies and procedures in place for cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing. Ms. Himmelsbach discussed the positive family feedback they have received regarding the additional health precautions their program has put into place as well as their ability to continue to provide childcare.

On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were nurturing and attentive to the children's needs. After-school gathering activities occurred. Staff were observed providing a companionable presence allowing children to have choice in their programming experiences. Routine transitions worked smoothly into the program's welcoming and cooperative environment. Staff were overheard providing children with many words of encouragement as well as meaningful discussion. Children responded well to staff and appeared to be truly enjoying their childcare experiences.

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

None noted.

#### **V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Licensing and Ms. Himmelsbach discussed continued efforts to repair outdoor large gross motor areas/fencing as a result of the recent Derecho Storm.

Given this year's current unprecedented circumstances (including pandemic and Derecho Storm), management and staff are greatly commended for their continued commitment to provide childcare with such increased mindfulness and strong emphasis on health and safety.

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A full license is issued. Thank you for the visit.

\*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.