Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Lil' Hands Big Dreams

Provider No.: 36394

Address: 810 North AVE, Norwalk, IA, 50211

County: Warren

Director's Name: Mary Ferden

On-Site Supervisor: Caitlyn Ferden

Phone Number: 5159810717

E-Mail: lilhandsbigdreams@live.com

HHS Visit Date: 08/03/2026

Licensing Period: 07/01/2025 to 07/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 03/13/2024

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

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

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

- [ ] 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 5:30 PM		
Tuesday	6:30 AM to 5:30 PM		
Wednesday	6:30 AM to 5:30 PM		
Thursday	6:30 AM to 5:30 PM		
Friday	6:30 AM to 5:30 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	26	40	25	115
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

Lil' Hands Big Dreams opened in August 2011. The center has three buildings, located in a row in the same block. The center has secured entrances. The center provides child care for children ages infancy through 2nd grade. All the buildings have secured entrances. Mary and Brian Ferden are the owners. Mary Ferden is the director. Mary was a registered in home child care provider prior to opening up this center. She also had experience in a child care center working at Principal Child Development Center. Caitlyn Ferden is the on site supervisor.

An unannounced visit was completed on today's visit. All areas subject to HHS licensing were reviewed. Mandatory postings are in place at the entrances. Class schedules and lesson plans were posted by classroom entrances. The center uses Experience for their learning curriculum, BrightWheel's learning curriculum. The classrooms are well furnished with age appropriate supplies and furnishings. Children's artwork is displayed in classrooms.

Mary and Brian assisted with today's visit. All classrooms were viewed today. There were seven infants present in the infant classroom. present. Two staff were working in the infant room. There were seven children in the toddlers (1's) class. The 2/3's had twelve children present. There were two staff working with this age group. The 3's class had ten children in attendance. Two staff were working with this class. There were nine children in the 4's class. There was one staff working with this age group. Children were observed in classrooms and outdoors on the playground. Children were observed during some transition times, during child directed activities and some were observed napping. Staffs' interactions with children were positive during the visit.

The center has a full kitchen. There is a cook on staff. The center serves breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack. Menus are on a six week rotation. Menus show compliance with CACFP requirements.

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The center has a few playground areas. The middle playground has poured rubber for surfacing. There are also concrete paths. The other playground has grass. Fencing is in place for both playgrounds. The center completes playground checklists.

The center doesn't provide transportation. The center walks to some nearby parks.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

Mary has a NAEYC director membership. The center has been nominated as the favorite Warren County Daycare. The center started participating in the Universal PreK/Preschool Program through the local school district the 2018-2019. There are security cameras in the classrooms. The center uses Brightwheel which allows parents to receive communication about their children's activities throughout the day. The center also uses Experience, through Brightwheel, for lesson planning.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

109.12(4)e: The provider shall follow safe sleep practices for infants under one year of age:Infants shall always be placed on their backs for sleep.Infants shall be placed on a firm mattress with a tight fitted sheet.Infants shall not be allowed to sleep on a bed, sofa, air mattress or other soft surface.No child shall be allowed to sleep in any item not designed for infant sleeping, including but not limited to an infant seat, car seat, swing, or bouncy seat.No toys, soft objects, stuffed animals, pillows, bumper pads, blankets, or loose bedding shall be allowed in the sleeping area with the infant.No co-sleeping shall be allowed.Sleeping infants shall be actively observed by sight and sound.If an alternate sleeping position is needed, a signed physician or physician assistant authorization with statement of medical reason is required and an expiration date. An infant was observed in a crib, with a swaddling sleepsack. This was addressed during the visit. Mary said staff should be aware infants can't be swaddled without a doctor's note, with a medical reason provided. Staff were provided a note from the doctor, which stated the infant could have a sleep sack, but not a swaddling sleepsack.

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

NA

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

The center has a full license.

*Note: If you are the Child Care Center Director and you feel something is unclear or unjustly cited, please contact me (phone 515-362-7823; email melinda.larson@hhs.iowa.gov) so that we may discuss the issue. If necessary, I can make a notation in your record. You may also send a letter that will be included in your licensing file noting any disagreement you may have with this report. If you have the need for any additional information discussed during my visit, please contact me and I will forward the information to you. Thank you.

Date: 08/05/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Melinda Larson, Child Care Licensing Consultant

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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**.