Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Nisse Preschool and Kids Place

Provider No.: 18229

Address: 311 College Dr, Decorah, IA, 52101

County: Winneshiek

Director's Name: Emily Secor

On-Site Supervisor: Karen Frick

Phone Number: 5633824794

E-Mail: director@nissepreschool.org

HHS Visit Date: 01/26/2026

Licensing Period: 02/01/2026 to 02/01/2028

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 11/28/2023

Comments: Compliance on 12/13/23

Report Visit Type:

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

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

Quality Rating: 1

- [ ] Accrediation

Program Duration:

- [ ] Year-Round
- [X] School Year
- [ ] Summer Only

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Program Population Served:

- [ ] Infant(0-<24 Months)
- [ ] Toddler
- [X] PreSchool
- [ ] School Age
- [ ] All Ages

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	0	0	29	0	29
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

On 01/26/26 I made an unannounced licensing visit to Nisse Preschool and Kids Place in Decorah. I met with Emily Secor, the director. Ms. Secor started with the program in August 2023. She completed NAC training in 2025. Karen Frick is the on-site supervisor and lead teacher. She started with the program in September 2019. She has a BA and an AA in early childhood and was previously employed by Head Start. Ms. Frick is a NAEYC member. Laurie “Laura” Betts and Janessa “Nessa” Stoen are the assistants in the room. The program also employs three extended care staff members.

The program is in a free-standing building. The program operates Monday through Friday from 7:45 am until 5:30 pm and serves preschool-aged children. The program partners with the Decorah Community School system to provide preschool through the voluntary four-year-old preschool grant. The four-year-old program meets on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 8:00 am until 1:00 pm. The center also provides a three-year-old preschool program. The three-year-old program meets on Thursday and Friday from 8:00-11:00 am. Extended childcare is offered at the completion of the preschool programs. There is a total of 37 children enrolled in the childcare center.

The program operates out of one large room. An inspection of the room was completed. Windows provide natural lighting. The room is decorated with pictures of the children and their families. The room is also decorated with the children’s art projects, and posters to assist the children with the learning process, such as the alphabet, colors and numbers. The children’s birthdays were posted. There is an area for circle time.

The centers observed on the day of the licensing visit include library, blocks, table toys, games, puzzles, transportation, art, Play-Doh, dramatic play, listening, writing, math, science/discovery, woodworking, puppets, sensory table and music. Centers were arranged in a manner that allowed easy movement between activities, but it also allowed for clear supervision by staff members. Materials were in good condition. The materials are located at child level, so they are easily accessible to the children.

Cots are used to nap for the children who stay for extended care.

There are two bathrooms available for the children. Each bathroom has one toilet and one sink. Handwashing procedures were posted in both locations. Children must be potty trained to attend the program.

The four-year-old preschool program uses Creative Curriculum to develop lesson plans. GOLD assessments are completed on each child, and they follow the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards (QPPS). They also use Second Step, Read It Again curriculum and a math curriculum. They follow the Early Learning Outcomes (ELO) to prepare the children for school. Creative Curriculum is also the primary source for creating lesson plans for the three-year-old program, but other resources are also utilized. A center assessment is completed on the three-yea-old children. Activities are developed around

studies. The length of time spent on each study depends on the children's interest level.

Ms. Frick makes one home visit to the homes of the four-year-old children and they have two conferences each year. The three-yea-old children have one conference each year and no home visits.

Nisse Preschool uses the Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) program in their classroom. The program partners with Keystone AEA to work with children who have identified needs. A newsletter is provided to parents in the four-year-old program each week and to parents in the three-year-old program each month.

The four-year-old children take field trips, and they use a school bus for transportation and go on walking field trips. The three-year-old preschool class takes walking field trips.

There was a phone with emergency numbers and the program's address and phone number in the classroom. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and evacuation diagrams were posted by the main program door and outdoor exits throughout the center. A daily schedule was posted and a lesson plan was available for review.

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. I reviewed documentation of playground inspections. The radon test was completed in December 2023 and is good for two years because they have a radon mitigation system. Results were within EPA guidelines. A radon mitigation system was put in after high radon levels were detected in the past. The annual fuel burning inspection was completed and no concerns were noted. A carbon monoxide detector was on site and is located near the microwave. Outlets were protected. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 11/28/23, with compliance on 12/13/23.

The program does not participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) but does follow the guidelines. The program serves a morning snack and lunch to the preschool children and an afternoon snack is provided for the children in extended care. Parents can purchase lunch from the Winneshiek Medical Center or parents can provide a lunch from home for the children. The program can supplement the meals from home if necessary. A volunteer picks up the lunches and delivers them to the childcare center. Lunch is delivered individually packaged. The center provides milk. Lunch menus were posted.

Snacks are provided by the parents in the morning and by the center in the afternoon. Snacks are documented on a calendar. There were several days when the afternoon snack was not documented. You must document both the morning and afternoon snack every day. Disposable products are used. There are sinks available in a storage room to wash dishes using the three-step method when necessary. Snacks were stored according to the NHSPS guidelines. There is a refrigerator on site and thermometers were present. Allergies were posted.

The center uses bleach and water to sanitize the food tables.

The playground is a fenced-in area. Poly Extruded Matting (PEM) provides the cushion surfacing. The PEM Playground Matting has shredded rubber contained in chambers. There is a slide and a bicycle merry-go-round for the children. There is also a sandbox, sensory table, basketball hoop, a playhouse, woodworking, blocks and transportation items. A picnic table and two benches in this area for the children to rest. The program purchased a new white board for art. You need to fence off the air condition unit so children do not have access.

The parent information is located on a bulletin board inside the entrance. The mandatory reporter, childcare consultant and the handbook availability were posted. The license was conspicuously hung. A no-smoking sign was posted at the entrance.

Staff and children's files were reviewed at the time of the licensing visit. I reviewed eight children files. They were in good condition. There was one outdated physical but this will not be cited because there was not a pattern of disregard.

I reviewed two staff files. They were in great condition.

I reviewed policy and procedures, staff and parent handbooks. The necessary written emergency procedures and policies were present. Emergency Preparedness Plans have been completed.

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2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

Ms. Secor has worked hard and taken several hours of training to become the director. She completed NAC training in 2025. She is organized and makes corrections immediately. Karen Frick is the lead teacher in the classroom and she has been with the program since 2019. The three teachers in the classroom had amazing teamwork. They each have a role and they do it without instruction. All three interacted with the children at their level and were actively engaged in play. They made the learning environment fun and inviting. Staff members are enthusiastic and it came across in how they taught and interacted with the children. They were flexible but maintained a routine for the children. They provided the children with praise and used positive redirection when necessary. Ms. Frick provided the children with clear and easy to read instructions. She maintained great conversation with the children and allowed the children to share stories. Staff members change out centers routinely so that children do not get bored. Staff members modeled good manners for the children. They included children in activities and encouraged them to use their imaginations. Children appeared to enjoy their time at the program. I enjoyed listening to them sing and watching them dance.

Ms. Secor states they have three teachers in the classroom and they have a large classroom.

Ms. Secor states the children receive individual attention throughout the day.

Ms. Secor their classroom gives them a good space to provide supervision.

Ms. Secor states their program is close to town, which is convenient for parents and allows for field trips.

Ms. Secor is very organized. She had easy to read staff and children's files and an organized licensing binder.

Ms. Secor states the Brightwheel app allows for parent communication and they also use it for billing. Parents can look at what they owe at any time and parents typically use auto withdrawal and pay through the app. The app has streamlined the process.

The program has an IQ4K level of 1 that expires on 10/31/26.

Keystone AEA provides a media library and van delivery for the program.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

There are no citations.

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

N/A

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

A full license is issued. All DHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period.

An administrative change is being made to name Emily Secor as the director. I have informed her she needs to formally make the request in I-Power. Karen Frick will remain the on-site supervisor. The email address has not changed.

The program had a terrific visit and did not have any violations.

Date: 01/29/2026

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HHS Licensing Consultant: Becky Frost

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**.