Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Little Sprouts Children's Center New Hampton

Provider No.: 22117

Address: 201 N Locust, New Hampton, IA, 50659

County: Chickasaw

Director's Name: Amy Ameling

On-Site Supervisor: Monica Rittenberry

Phone Number: 6413945840

E-Mail: lscc.director.nh@gmail.com

HHS Visit Date: 06/23/2026

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

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 05/07/2025

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

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

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

Quality Rating: 1

- [ ] 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 6:00 PM		
Tuesday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Wednesday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Thursday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Friday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	20	17	30	32	99
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

On 06/23/26 I made an unannounced off year licensing visit to Little Sprouts Children's Center New Hampton. I met with Amy Ameling, the director. Ms. Ameling started with the program as the director in August 2020. She has a BA in elementary education with an early childhood endorsement. She has a minor in speech and theater secondary education. She is currently taking college credits in business and management classes. She has previous childcare experience. Ms. Ameling is NAC certified. I also met with Monica Rittenberry, the on-site supervisor. Ms. Rittenberry has been with the program since August 2016 and has an AA in early childhood. She is currently taking classes to get her BA in early childhood education. She is NAC certified. There are 29 staff members employed by the center.

The program operates out of the New Hampton First United Methodist Church. The program is not affiliated with the church. They started in this new location on 06/02/22. It is open Monday through Friday from 6:30 am until 6:00 pm. They serve children ages six weeks through preschool aged. There are currently 80 children enrolled.

The center operates out of the following classrooms: Sweet Peas (6 weeks through 6 months), Caterpillars (6-12 months), Butter Cups (12-18 months), Owlets (18-24 months), Cotton Tails (mixed-age infants), Sunflowers (two-year-olds), Tiger Lilys (older toddlers-2.5 through three year olds) and Grass Stains (three-year-old preschool). An inspection of each room was completed. Windows provide natural lighting. The rooms are decorated with the children's art projects, and posters to assist the children with the learning process, such as the alphabet, shapes, colors and numbers. The children's birthdays were posted. There are areas for circle time in the rooms.

The centers observed on the day of the licensing visit include library, Lego/blocks, table toys, games, puzzles, transportation, art, dramatic play, writing, math, science/discovery, woodworking, Play-Doh, sensory table and music.

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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.

Ms. Ameling states the center is using a curriculum based on the Iowa Early Learning Standards. Staff members use a variety of resources to develop lesson plans, but they have specific developmental boxes on the form to complete to make sure the lesson is well rounded and complete. Lesson plans were available in each room and posted on the parent board.

The center uses the Playground app to complete daily sheets for the children under the age of two. It is also used to communicate with all the families.

The center works with Keystone AEA to provide services to children with identified needs. They also routinely work with Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) to provide a safe environment for the children.

There was a phone with emergency numbers and the center's address and phone number in the classrooms. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and evacuation diagrams were posted by all the main program doors and outdoor exits throughout the center. A daily schedule was posted in each room.

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. I reviewed documentation of monthly playground inspections. A radon test was completed in June 2026 and is good for five years. They are waiting for results but the tests results from June 2024 were within EPA guidelines. A fuel burning inspection is not necessary because the gas boiler has been removed and the facility is now completely electric. Carbon monoxide detectors are in each of the rooms. They are located on the ceiling as part of the fire protection system. Outlets were protected. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 05/07/25.

The program participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The center provides the children with breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. Jen Marshall is the cook. A new menu is prepared each week. The children eat in their classrooms. Family style is not used. Dishes are sometimes returned to the kitchen to be washed in an industrial dishwasher and other times staff members wash them in the classroom using the three-step method. Menus and allergies were posted. There is an industrial refrigerator, an upright freezer, and a chest freezer in the kitchen and thermometers were present. Not all food items were stored according to NHSPS guidelines. I observed cereal, crackers and pasta not in sealed containers. Once a food item is opened it must be stored in a sealed plastic, metal or glass container and date it.

In the infant rooms the center provides two brands of formula or parents can bring their own. The center provides baby food and cereal. Bottles are washed in the rooms using the three-step method.

There is a refrigerator in each classroom and thermometers were present.

The center uses bleach and water or Sani-Tyze Food Contact Sanitizer to sanitize the food tables and they use either bleach or Odoban to disinfect the changing tables. Please be aware that the Sani-Tyze Food Contact Sanitizer requires a portable water rinse before the children eat off the table and the Odoban has a ten minute dwell time. Make sure all the bottles are labeled with the product name and dwell time. You must use a new rag each time you clean and sanitize tables.

I observed or discussed diaper changes with the staff members. In the Caterpillar room the staff member did not clean the changing table with soap and water prior to using the Odoban. In addition, in the Caterpillar and Sweer Pea rooms staff members wiped the Odoban off immediately. It must stay on the table for the ten minute dwell time. There was powder being used on a child in the Owlet room. Powder is considered an asthmatic trigger and cannot be used in the classroom.

I observed handwashing practices. Staff members in some of the classrooms spray soap and water on the children's hands and then wipe it off with a dry cloth. Soap and water from a spray bottle should not be sprayed directly on the children's hands as the splatter could get in their eyes. You can spray a rag with soap and water and clean their hands and then you need to use a wet rag to wipe the soap off. A new rag must be used for each child. In one of the classrooms a staff member was only using a wet wipe to wash children's hands. There is no cleaning agent on wet wipes and children must wash their hands with soap and water. Please discuss with all staff members the proper procedure for washing children's hands.

Mats and cribs are used to nap.

The parent information is located on a bulletin board in 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.

The program has a playground across the street from the church. The area is fenced in. Rubber tiles are used for fall surfacing. There is a large tarp for shade. There are multiple pieces of climbing equipment. There is also a grassy area that has a sandbox. There is a small tarp over the sandbox for shade. There are also trees for shade. There are picnic tables and benches for the children to rest.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

On the day of my visit most of the classrooms were outside on the playground enjoying the nice weather. When they returned inside, they ate lunch and then napped. Staff members sat with the children while they ate and maintained positive conversation. They assisted the children as necessary with handwashing and with the meal. Staff members were on the floor entertaining the younger children with a book until lunch arrived. Child friendly music was playing in the rooms where the children were awake and soothing music was playing in the rooms where children were napping. Staff members offered the children choices and encouraged them to try things. Staff members provided the children with praise. They had great teamwork and were enthusiastic. During nap I observed staff members on the floor rubbing children's backs.

Ms. Ameling states they are using the CCA funds for employees.

Ms. Ameling states the center is more visible in the community.

Ms. Ameling states they have a good reputation in town.

Ms. Ameling states the children in their care are thriving.

Ms. Ameling states the center has five staff members utilizing WAGES and five staff members utilizing the TEACH program.

The center has an IQ4K level of 1 that expires 06/30/26, but the center has sent in the renewal papers for level 1.

Ms. Ameling states once each month lead staff members have planning time for lesson plans from 12:30-2:00 pm. All lesson plans are turned into the office. Ms. Ameling states she has been working with lead teachers to understand to understand a lesson plan does not have to be about always doing a craft, but that it can be giving the children an "experience" in the classroom. Staff members have adjusted well to the Iowa Early Learning Standards.

The center posts each classroom's newsletter and lesson plan on the parent board.

Ms. Ameling states they have weekly leadership meetings with the lead teachers and the administration team.

The center hires a company to do a deep cleaning of the center once each year and carpets are cleaned every six months. She emphasizes cleanliness and maintenance. Cleaning/opening/closing duties are posted in each classroom as a visual reminder.

Ms. Ameling and Ms. Rittenberry have completed the National Administrator Credential course. Ms. Ameling attended a NAEYC conference.

The program is in a secure center and there are cameras in each of the rooms and on the playground. Ms. Ameling has a television in the office to view camera footage.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

109.12(4)b: Each infant and toddler shall be diapered in a sanitary manner as frequently as needed at a central diapering area. Diapering, sanitation, and hand-washing procedures shall be posted and implemented in every diapering area. There shall be at least one changing table for every 15 infants.

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109.13(5): Centers shall ensure that food preparation and storage procedures are consistent with the recommendations of the CACFPs.
Not all food items were stored according to NHSPS guidelines. I observed cereal, crackers and pasta not in sealed containers. Once a food item is opened it must be stored in a sealed plastic, metal or glass container and date it.

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 for the remainder of the licensing period. All HHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period.

An administrative change is being made to remove Kathy Speicher as an on-site supervisor.

Targeted Assessment: Behavior Management:
I discussed with Ms. Ameling and Ms. Rittenberry their oversight of behavior management related to helping childcare staff: 1) Understand expectations, 2) managing frustrations, 3) monitor performance. Ms. Ameling states staff members take on-line trainings, including Essentials and Passport. She has face to face orientation at the beginning of a staff member's employment and they discuss discipline. Ms. Ameling states staff members are told they only put their hands on children to provide "care services" or "positive touches".

Ms. Rittenberry states they tell staff members if they feel overwhelmed or need a break to call them for help. They will go to the classroom to help. Sending children to the office is the final step. Ms. Ameling and Ms. Rittenberry state the staff members are good at bringing their concerns to administration.

Ms. Ameling and Ms. Rittenberry state they can hear staff and they will step in if breaks are needed. They can monitor by listening and walking through the hallways. They pay special attention if a staff member comes into work and they seem like they are in a bad mood. They also monitor with the cameras in the rooms.

Date: 06/26/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Becky Frost

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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**.