Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Little Irish Preschool & After School

Provider No.: 48414

Address: 1903 S Broadway, Emmetsburg, IA, 50536

County: Palo Alto

Director's Name: Jean Hyslop (Principal)

On-Site Supervisor: Chelsi Titus

Phone Number: 7128523464

E-Mail: jhyslop@e-irish.org

HHS Visit Date: 01/06/2026

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

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 10/06/2025

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

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

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

- [ ] Accrediation

Program Duration:

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

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HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday			
Tuesday		8:00 AM to 11:00 AM	
Wednesday		8.00 AM to 11:00 AM	
Thursday		8.00 AM to 11:00 AM	
Friday			
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General			20		20
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

An unannounced annual visit was made to the Little Irish Preschool & After School program on 01-06-26. Jean Hyslop is the school principal and program director, and Chelsi Titus is the preschool lead teacher. Jean has a Masters degree and 20+ years experience in early childhood education, and has been with the program since its inception in 2017. Chelsi had previously been with the program as the associate teacher, and took over as the lead teacher at the start of the 2024-25 school year. Christie Smolik is the assistant teacher with the class and also started in that position with the 24-25 school year. The school had previously provided additional programming but is currently offering only the 3 year old preschool programming. All aspects subject to licensing standards were reviewed during the visit.

The layout, design, and operation of the classroom used for programming space remains the same as in prior visits. The preschool program is located in a single classroom of the Emmetsburg Catholic School building. High windows provide natural light but no ventilation or view. A secondary emergency exit is located at the rear of the room and exits through intervening storage spaces. While the doors did open easily and freely and there was a travel corridor through the stored items the program may want to consider organizing the space to maintain a wider access path. There is a sink in the classroom to facilitate hand washing. Bathrooms are located outside the room across the hallway. The classroom was observed to be clean with no immediate safety concerns noted due to maintenance or design. A phone is present in the room and emergency numbers are posted next to the phone. The preschool room has a long narrow design but is arranged to divide the space into activity centers that provide space for the children to play without creating any blind areas. The toys and materials present were in good repair and appropriate to the ages of the children present.

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2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

Good interactions were observed on the day of my visit with both teachers being actively engaged with the children presenting the planned curriculum and schedule. The class uses the Creative Curriculum to provide a structure that helps the children develop school readiness skills. The lesson plan is provided to parents in a newsletter and while a copy of that newsletter was not posted it was obvious that the class was following the curriculum. As an example the lesson plan had a specific learning concept focus of the letter, "I", which was reflected in a story that was read during a large group teacher lead activity. Both teachers were engaged with the children either presenting specific activities, or interacting with the children in their play. This included the teachers strategically positioning themselves in different areas of the room to provide supervision and assistance. Both teachers did make good use of proactive approaches to behavior management with recognizing positive behavior, using transition activities such as a timer and bell, and providing guided problem solving to help the children identify alternative options. One example was a situation in which a child had climbed into a cabinet. Chelsi spoke with the child identifying that it was not a safe choice, and helped the child identify other positive behavior options. This approach of focusing on safety and using calm tones rather than viewing the behavior as oppositional or negative allowed the child to rejoin the group quickly and with a positive attitude. Ratio was maintained in the classroom with two teachers present with nine children.

Due to the limited hours of operation meals are not served but snacks are provided. A limited supply of snack items is kept in the center, and the children are provided with milk. Good food storage practices were observed with most options being prepackaged single serving items, and those that were bulk packaged had been placed in air tight sealable containers as required. A menu of the snacks provided was maintained and generally the snacks did include credible food options such as crackers, or fruit. Snack was provided during the time of the visit and good food handling and service practices were followed. While the teachers did not eat with the children supervision was provided at the table.

Good health and safety policies are in place with the teachers escorting the children to the restroom as a group prior to snack service and ensuring that the children washed their hands and that they did so in an effective manner. Hand sanitizer was also available in the classroom and entry to the cafeteria, and stored where use could be monitored by the teachers. There due to the limited hours of operation medications are not routinely administered but policies are in place should it become necessary in the future. Information regarding response plans are maintained for children who have diagnosed allergies, or other health concerns. A first aid kit is maintained in the classroom and had a limited supply of materials to address most common first aid needs. Additional materials are available in the school office. Chemical cleaners, personal items, and other items that could pose a safety risk to children were stored where they were not accessible to the children.

The program has access to the school playground, and gymnasium for large motor skill activity play. A new preschool playground was installed in 2025 which has a commercial grade climbing structure, large sand/water play table, and other toys and materials such as balls that can be brought out for play. The equipment was in good repair and appeared to have been properly installed. Rubber mulch is used for fall surfacing and a good depth of material was present. The playground equipment is fully enclosed by chain link fencing which was in good repair. The children would also have access to large open grassy areas. Shade is limited to that which would be available from trees located outside of the fenced playground area.

The center did have the required postings for No Smoking, and Consultant Contact, but the postings for Mandatory Abuse Reporting and a copy of the License Certificate were not present. Other required postings for emergency evacuation, contact numbers, hand washing, menu, and schedule were present. Some information regarding the lesson plan was posted and while the center does provide a monthly newsletter with the curriculum focus information a copy of that newsletter should also be posted at the entrance to the classroom. In reviewing child files all required information was present. In reviewing staff files Chelsi needed an updated background check, but all other required documentation was present and current for both staff. All inspection logs and certificates were available and current though the Fire, and Tornado Evacuation Drills for the current year could not be located. The center does maintain a combination of handbooks with a general school handbook, and specific handbooks for the 3, and 4 year old preschool programs all of which are available on-line. Taken as a whole all required policies were present though some such as incident reporting could be expanded to provide more guidance that incident reports will be completed not just when children have an injury, but also for any situations of sexualized behavioral acting out, or significant changes in functioning. Additionally it was noted that while the general school handbook had been updated the 3 year old preschool handbook had not identified a recent change requiring parents to be notified that when providing child file information approved religious or medical exemptions could be provided in lieu of documentation of immunizations.

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3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

Required postings for Mandatory Child Abuse Reporting, and a copy of the License Certificate were not posted near the entrance where they would have been readily visible to parents and visitors as required.

Documentation of emergency drill practice could not be found on the day of the visit. Chelsi did state that those drills have been completed, and she had maintained a log of those drills.

During the visit children were observed to be allowed to leave the classroom unescorted to use the restroom. While the children are of an age that they may not require assistance, and the facility is locked to reduce the risk of unauthorized access Licensing Standards does require that close and careful supervision is provided which is interpreted to mean within direct line of sight and sound at all times. This would ensure that teachers are in a position to provide assistance if needed, or respond to concerns such as children attempting to elope from the center or engage in other behavior that could result in injury or harm.

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

Chelsi stated she would continue to look for the emergency drill log and forward a copy once found. If a copy of past drills cannot be located the center will need to start a new record making notation that the log of previous records had been misplaced.

Copies of the required mandatory reporter notice, and center license certificate were sent to Chelsi to post at the entrance to the classroom.

5. 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.

Date: 01/08/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Ray Salsbury

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**.