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

**Name of Center:** Emmet County Head Start **Enrollment:** 68 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 30265

**Street:** 315 North 6th Street **City:** Estherville Iowa **Zip** 51334 **County:** Emmet

**Mailing Address:** 101 Robins Street, Graettinger, IA, 51342

**Director's Name:** Sarina Smith **Phone Number:** 712-765-1058

**On-Site Supervisor(s):** Chantel Kloucek **E-Mail:** ssmith@udmo.com

**Date(s) of Visit:** 01-30-2025

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

**LICENSING VISITS**

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

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

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

**Date Inspected:** 12-18-2023

**Comments :**

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

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

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

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

Get-Well Evening Care Special Needs

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

| **HOURS:** | *Year-round* | *School-Year* | *Summer Only* |
|---|---|---|---|

| LICENSE CAPACITY | Infants | 2 Years | Preschool | School-Age | Capacity |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| General | | 31 | 71 | | 102 |
| Summer | | | | | 0 |

**QRS Rating:** N/A

| RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE: | |
|---|---|
| X | **FULL** license from 02-01-2024 to 02-01-2026 |
| | **PROVISIONAL** license from |
| | **DENIAL** of initial application |
| | **SUSPENSION** of license |
| | **REVOCATION** of license |

**Licensing Consultant:** Raymond Salsbury **Date:** 02-20-2025

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

NA

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

An unannounced annual visit was made to the Emmet County Head Start program on 01-30-25. Chantel Kloucek is the on-site supervisor and is well qualified for the position based on her education, training, and having been with the Head Start program since 2014. The program is one of several Head Start locations overseen by Upper Des Moines Opportunities where Sarina Smith is the Program Director, and Julie Edwards is the executive director. The program is located in the old Roosevelt Elementary school in Estherville and is the only occupant of the building. The program provides Head Start (HS) preschool programming for children 3-4 years of age, and Early Head Start (EHS) serving children 2-3 years of age. There are currently 68 children enrolled in the program. The HS program is served in three classrooms by 6 teachers, and the EHS is served in 2 classrooms with 4 teachers. In addition the program has several home consultants, 2 cooks, and other staff who are also present and available to provide assistance if needed. All aspects of the program subject to Licensing Standards were reviewed.

The layout, design, and operation of the building and program remains the same as in previous reports. The program occupies five classrooms with 3 for the HS program, 2 for the EHS program, and also makes use of the gymnasium. Each room was observed to be clean with no concerns identified due to maintenance. Covers have been installed over radiators in each occupied classroom, hallways, and the gymnasium to reduce the risk of contact burns. Restroom facilities are located off the main hallways and children are escorted to the restrooms as needed for the HS program. The EHS program has a shared restroom and changing station in a central pass-through space between the rooms. Each room has a large bank of windows along the exterior walls that provide ample natural light, ventilation, and a view of the outdoors. One window in the 4 year old classroom is designated as a secondary emergency exit. The other two HS classrooms share an intervening door that serves as secondary egress allowing them to exit through the other classroom if needed. Both EHS classrooms have direct secondary exits to the outdoors. All exits opened freely and easily. The program has a lower level with enclosed locker rooms that serve as emergency tornado shelters. Sinks are located in each of the 3 year old HS classrooms, and EHS classrooms to facilitate hand washing. A new sink was installed in the hallway outside the 4 year old classroom to facilitate hand washing and staff do provide supervision to the children when using that sink. Each room has created activity centers through the use of furniture and equipment that are arranged so as not create any blind areas. Each center was stocked with a good variety of toys and materials that were in good repair and appropriate to the ages of the children present. A daily schedule and copy of the planned curriculum is posted for each room.

The center uses the Creative Curriculum and Gold Assessment to develop the curriculum. The curriculum plans are developed independently for each classroom identifying a general focus theme, and specific learning concepts such as letters, numbers, colors, and shapes. The teachers do rotate the materials present in the classrooms to support the curriculum such as in the 4 year old classroom where the general focus theme was Boxes. As part of that theme the children used pieces of cardboard boxes for painting canvases. All of the teachers were actively engaged with the children during the visit with either presenting the planned curriculum, playing with the children, or attending to their needs. Planned curriculum activities included options such as reading to the children in large group settings, working with small groups, or one on one with children on a specific task or assessment activity. At other times when the children were engaged in self-directed center play the teachers would move between centers talking with the children about their play. The center uses a positive behavior support approach that is effective in reducing the occurrence of negative behavior. This included the use

of routines, transition activities, and recognizing and praising positive behavior. When children did engage in negative behavior such as not participating in a group activity the teachers responded by ignoring behavior that was nonaggressive and nondisruptive with encouraging the child to rejoin the group. For behaviors that were more disruptive such as when having problems with peers the teachers would provide redirection and guided problem solving. Using these approaches were very effective in not creating a power struggle with children that could escalate behavior and resulted in the children returning to appropriate play and continuing their day within a few minutes. Each teacher used calm and encouraging tones of voice when interacting with the children.

Good health and safety practices were generally observed on the day of my visit. While most of the children are toilet trained the center does have changing stations changing tables and standing options both for younger children in the Early Head Start classes that may still be in diapers, and those using pull-ups or who have a toileting accident. During the visit I did observe one teacher assisting Early Head Start children with toileting and pull-up changes. While none of the children being observed had soiled themselves and were able to sit on the toilet, and the teacher did have gloves on she did not deglove between children. It was reviewed that doing so would help to reduce the risk of disease transmission. Good handwashing practices were observed with the teachers ensuring the children washed their hands as required following restroom use, before meals, and at other times as needed. Each classroom has a first aid kit which contains a supply of materials necessary to address most common first aid needs, and additional supplies are maintained in the office. Good cleaning practices were observed with the teachers waiting for children to be out of the immediate area before using chemical cleaners. The teachers did sanitize tables before and after meals, and other times such as when children were playing with play-doh. Chemical cleaners, and other items that could pose a safety risk to children were stored in areas where they are not accessible to the children. One issue that was noted is that the center did have disease exposure notices present which were posted outside the classrooms that the affected children had been attending. It was reviewed that while this is a good practice it is required that all disease notices be clearly posted at the main entrance. This would ensure that all families and visitors to the center would be aware of the exposure either prior or immediately after entry so that those who may wish to avoid exposure can take steps to not venture further into the building.

The center does have a full kitchen and meals are prepared on-site. The kitchen was observed to be clean with no indication of any rodent or insect infestation. Good food storage was observed for both refrigerated and dry pantry food items. A copy of the planned menu was posted and the being prepared was consistent with the planned menu. Good food handling practices were observed on the day of my visit with the staff washing their hands, and gloving when handling foods. Meals are currently being served in the classrooms family style. The teachers do sit at the tables and eat with the children to provide supervision and model good eating habits.

The center playground has two areas with climbing structures with one intended for the older HS children, and the other for the younger EHS children. The playgrounds are fully enclosed, and separated from each other by fencing. The equipment was observed to be generally in good repair and appropriate to the ages of the children present. One of the climbing structures did have a loose bolt, and other hardware such as bolts on the fences were long and extended well beyond the nut. These should be replaced with shorter bolts, or cut so that no more than 3 threads extend beyond the nut. Foam tiles are used for fall surfacing. The center does have a gymnasium which provides the children with an area where they can engage in large motor skill activities when weather conditions do not allow for outdoor play. The gymnasium is divided through the use of mobile fence barriers to create three separate play spaces for the various age groups.

In reviewing administrative records all required postings for No Smoking, Consultant Contact, Mandatory Reporter notice , and License certificate were present on the day of my visit. All inspection logs and certificates were available and current. The center uses an electronic file system for child information and all required information was present and current for each child. Staff files are reviewed separately at the program central office and any issues identified are addressed with the parent agency at that time.

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

The center continues to update and upgrade equipment with having installed several new changing tables, a storage shed for play equipment, handwashing sinks, and a freezer unit. It was reported that these were acquired from a grant.

The center continues to participate in the IQ4K program which seeks to implement best practice recommendations. The center is currently rated a Level 2 program out of a 5 level scale with a rating of 5 being the highest.

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

None Cited

**V. 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 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.

*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.