Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Summit Schools Inc

Provider No.: 45341

Address: 1010 Regent St NE, Cedar Rapids, IA, 52402

County: Linn

Director's Name: April Bickford

On-Site Supervisor: Erin Valarezo

Phone Number: 3192942036

E-Mail: april.bickford@summitschools.org
kathleen.reinwart@summitschools.org
erin.valarezo@summitschools.org

HHS Visit Date: 10/03/2025

Licensing Period: 11/01/2025 to 11/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 03/31/2025

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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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	30	50
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

Summit Schools is an accredited, private, independent, non-parochial PreK-Middle School in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Summit Schools was founded in 1998. Specifically, Summit Schools Inc (the school's childcare program) first became DHHS licensed in May 2015. This license includes before and after school/preschool childcare program.

Summit School director (principal) and Summit School Inc director (childcare) is April Bickford. Ms. Bickford became director in fall 2023. Ms. Bickford has a BA degree in elementary education, MA degree in special education and PK-12 Principal/Supervisor of Special Education certification. Ms. Bickford has previous experience working with children and participates in annual professional development. On-Site Supervisor Erin Valarezo has been the program since November 2011 and since it first became DHHS licensed in May 2015. Ms. Valarezo has a degree in Early Childhood Education, a plethora of experience working with children, and continues to participate in annual professional development.

On 10/3/2025, building, grounds and program space were observed to all be in good repair. Primary programming occurs in the school cafeteria. Staff were observed warmly greeting children and families as they arrived for childcare prior to the school day commencing. Curriculum on the day of the monitoring visit included individual book reading, small group visiting, and large gross motor play. Staff were observed encouraging good sportsmanship and the use of social graces. On 10/3/2025, staff were observed to be in ratio and actively engaged in programming with the children. Routine transitions were observed to go well. Children appeared comfortable with staff and to be enjoying their morning.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

The mission of Summit Schools and Summit Schools Inc "empowers each student to exceed their academic, social, and emotional goals to ensure a lifetime of success and personal fulfillment." The history of how Summit Schools and Summit Schools Inc came to fruition and evolved to present day (including location changes, ownership changes stemming back to 1985, name changes, survival of the 2008 flood, and so on) is impressive.

Summit Schools Inc has the following website for families and the community to learn about the program: https://summitschools.org/about/.

As of 10/3/2025, Summit Schools Inc continues to operate under a board of trustees. The program's management team (e.g. Ms. Bickford, Ms. Valarezo, office manager Kathleen Reinwart) continues to be consistent and seasoned. The management team maintains system of organization in place to help ensure administrative items are completed and maintained in a secure manner. The management team is knowledgeable of licensing guidelines as well as their own program's policies and procedures. Ms. Valarezo described their team of staff as exceptional, having staff who are also Summit School teachers-employees with a strong commitment to the program's success as well as having several staff enrolled in a local college

taking child related courses.

On 10/3/2025, Summit Schools Inc was again found to be maintaining required posting, maintaining parent-staff-program information centers, utilizing technological communication resources, and offering family programming activities. Curriculum continues to include social-emotional learning with opportunities for problem solving, smaller group activities based upon age for homework time, quiet reading activities, teacher inspired ideas and child focused interests to peek child curiosity and innovation. Older enrolled children are encouraged to take leadership roles within the program providing positive role modeling for younger students.

Summit Schools Inc continues to have and update as needed policies and procedures that include those for safety, daily health checks, hand washing, cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting. On 10/3/2025, Ms. Valarezo acknowledged how their team of staff help ensure the children's space is sanitary and hazard free each day by following the policies and procedures. Ms. Valarezo also talked about having support from their trustees and the school (e.g. school kitchen staff, school administration, school maintenance, school custodial team) as to daily building and grounds conditions and repairs. It's noted that the school kitchen is inspected by the local health department.

Summit Schools Inc has emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. The program successfully navigated through the 2008 historic Linn County flood, 2019 winter Polar Vortex, 2019 health (covid-19) pandemic, 8/10/20 Derecho Storm, 2021 food supply issues, 2022 infant formula shortages, air quality alerts (2023, 2025) and 7/19/24 global technology outage.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

109.6(4)d: Center repeats national criminal history checks at a minimum of every four years or when aware of additional history that occurs.

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

109.6(4)d: Center repeats national criminal history checks at a minimum of every four years or when aware of additional history that occurs.
- Review record check rules. Prior to involvement in childcare, each person subject to the record check process shall have an Iowa record check completed with results on file. Prior to involvement in childcare, each person subject to the record check process shall have submitted to a federal record check. Each staff shall have results and be fully cleared to work in childcare (including what to do if there's a transgression) as required by code.

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

Ensure every staff has a current physical exam documented on required form 470-5152.

Continue to ensure there is a working UL Standard 2034 carbon monoxide detector on-site.

Since the last review, Ms. Valarezo talked about having gone through child supplies to reorganize and dispose of damaged materials as well as items with missing parts or pieces. As a result, please increase childcare specific consumable programming supplies (e.g. paints, paint brushes, construction paper, glue, markers, colored pencils, scissors, crafting items) as well as overall preschool-age and school-age materials (e.g. games, books, soft corner items, sensory items, dramatic play items, dolls, building blocks, manipulatives). Childcare shall have their own designated wheeled-mobile shelving, storage bins and storage cabinets for materials. At least one shall have a locking mechanism to store any items needed to be inaccessible to children and the public.

Please increase shade on the outdoor play area.

While the childcare sometimes has access to various school materials, please increase large gross motor materials that the childcare has access to during all hours of operation (e.g. low to ground balance items, steppingstones, nature items, romper stompers, hula hoops, balls, jump ropes, sensory items, sidewalk chalk). For ease of access during all hours of the

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childcare's operation, the program shall also have their own designated wheeled large gross motor supply cart as well as storage area for their large gross motor materials.

To help with the items noted in the special recommendations section of this report, please apply for the "Growing Iowa" fund designed to support childcare in Iowa by connecting with CCR&R (https://iowaccrr.org/staff/; Region 5 Director Becky White at 563-484- 4587).

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A full license is issued. Thank you for the visit.

Date: 10/15/2025

HHS Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons

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**.