Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: NICAO Head Start-Algona

Provider No.: 30259

Address: 613 Diagonal St, Algona, IA, 50511

County: Kossuth

Director's Name: Megan Judish

On-Site Supervisor: Paige Bunkofski

Phone Number: 6414941891

E-Mail: mjudisch@NICAO-ONLINE.ORG

HHS Visit Date: 09/11/2026

Licensing Period: 10/01/2025 to 10/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 02/26/2024

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

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

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

Quality Rating: 3

- [ ] Accrediation

Program Duration:

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

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HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday		9:00 AM to 1:30 PM	
Tuesday		9:00 AM to 1:30 PM	
Wednesday		9:00 AM to 1:30 PM	
Thursday		9:00 AM to 1:30 PM	
Friday		9:00 AM to 1:30 PM	
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

- [ ] Infant(0-<24 Months)
- [ ] Toddler
- [X] PreSchool
- [ ] 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 Algona Head Start program on 09-11-26 where I met with the lead teacher Paige Bunkofski, and the co-lead teacher Rhonda Cash. Paige took over as the lead teacher at the start of the 26-27 school year and is well qualified with a teaching degree and having worked in other classrooms with Head Start. Rhonda also has extensive experience in early childhood education with more than 20 years of working in the field. This program is located in a free standing building in Algona and is overseen by a board of directors as one of multiple Head Start locations operated by NIACO . The center provides head start preschool programming for four year old children only. There are currently 16 children enrolled in the center served by two teachers and cook. All aspects of the center were reviewed during this visit.

The layout of the center has not changed from previous visits. The center has a centrally located room for the kitchen that creates a U shape around the exterior where the programming takes place. One leg is used for primary programming, the cross section used for meal service, and the other leg houses the restrooms and teacher work area. The center was observed to be clean and free of any concerns related to maintenance. Windows along the exterior walls provide natural light, a view of the outdoors, and ventilation. There is a large set of patio doors that lead to an attached porch and the outdoor playground area and which also serve as secondary emergency egress. The facility has a basement area that is used as a storm shelter. All emergency exits were observed to be clear of obstruction. Bathrooms are located on one side of the building. Activity centers are created through the placement of furniture and play structures which are arranged so as not to create any blind areas. The arrangement of activity centers has changed with the use of mobile barriers and entry gates that help to reduce the wandering of children between activity centers as well as between the primary programming area and the rest of the building. Each activity center had a good variety of toys and materials which were observed to be in good repair and appropriate to the ages of the children that were present.

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2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

Programming & Interaction:
The center has a very strong curriculum with a focus on helping children build school readiness skills for both hard learning concepts of reading, writing, and math, but also for social interaction. The has an established schedule which moves the children through activities of large and small group teacher lead activities, self-directed play, indoor and outdoor play, and meals. Each teacher was observed to be actively engaged with the children following the planned schedule and presenting the prepared curriculum. Each teacher presented a positive attitude using calm and engaging tones. The center uses a proactive behavior management approach and the teachers were observed to do an excellent job of implementing this with reviewing classroom expectations and plans, focusing on safety, and encouraging children to join the group rather than telling the children they could not do something. This approach resulted in the classroom operating very smoothly and efficiently despite there having been an incident at the center earlier in the morning with the police having been there responding to a disturbance that had occured. Ratio was maintained in the center as required with teachers escorting children to the restrooms, and communicating about which children they were taking with them when moving from the main group.

Health & Safety:
The teachers supervise and assist the children with restroom use, and hand washing. Tables were sanitized before and after meal service and done when children were not in the immediate area. First aid kits contain materials necessary to address most common first aid needs. Response plans were present and posted for all children with identified health concerns. Chemical cleaners and other items that could be a safety risk to children were stored in areas where they were not readily accessible to the children. The center implements other positive health practices such as the children brushing their teeth after meals, reminding them to cover their mouth when coughing/sneezing, and providing water when out on the playground to help the children stay hydrated.

Nutrition:
The center does have a full kitchen and all meals are prepared on-site. The kitchen was observed to be clean with no indication of insect or rodent infestation noted. Good food storage practices were in place for both dry pantry and refrigerated items. Good food handling and service practices were observed. Meals are served family style with the children using measured scoops to portion their own plates. The teachers do sit and eat with the children to provide assistance, supervision, and model good eating habits. A copy of the menu is posted and identifies a good variety of nutritious meal options.

Playground:
The playground remains the same with a residential grade wood constructed slide and swing structure, a geodesic climbing dome, and an air plane frame teeter totter. Other toys and materials are present and maintained in a storage shed that are brought out for play as needed. Pea gravel is used for fall surfacing and has developed a hard pan layer in high traffic/use areas such as the discharge zone of slides. The center also has a wooden porch and open grassy area where the children can play. The playground is fully enclosed by fencing which was observed to be in good repair. The fence does have several gates which are locked, but one gate was unlocked during the visit given that the emergency exit opens onto the playground. A large mature tree and the building provide shade. All toys, materials, and structures were observed to be in good repair.

Administration:
In reviewing administrative records all required notices for No Smoking, License Certificate, Mandatory Abuse Reporting, and Consultant Contact were posted in an area readily accessible to parents and visitors. Additional required postings for emergency evacuation, handwashing, emergency contacts, schedule, curriculum, and menu were also present. While the center is still within the first 30 days of operation and working to obtain physicals and immunization records each child file did have emergency contacts and authorizations present. Staff files, and annual inspection logs are reviewed at the program central office and independently of center visits and any issues identified will be addressed at that time.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

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109.11(4)a: Center must have safe outdoor program area adjacent to the center, with sufficient square footage to accommodate at least 30 percent of the enrollment capacity at any one time at 75 spear feet per child. Outdoor space must:Be free from litter and unsafe materials and free from contamination by the drainage or ponding of sewage or storm water.Include safe play equipment and an area of shade.Include fencing to protect from bodies of water or vehicular traffic. -- The pea gravel fall surfacing beneath the climbing structures has developed a hardpan layer such that there is insufficient loose fill material to provide adequate fall protection. The material either needs to be aerated or supplemented to ensure a depth of material compliant with the requirements as established in the CPSC Public Playground Safety Handbook (https://www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/325_PublicPlaygroundSafetyHandbook2025_7-30-25_1.pdf?VersionId=tpCoaKp.DSdJ0QmD4_29kwEHeQgFphM2).

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

It was reviewed that the center needed to restrict children from using climbing structures where fall surfacing was insufficient until the pea gravel can be aerated.

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: 09/14/2026

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**.