Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: West Hancock 3-Yr Old Preschool

Provider No.: 52081

Address: 510 9th Ave SW, Britt, IA, 50423

County: Hancock

Director's Name: Michelle DeHart

On-Site Supervisor: Sarah Kirschbaum

Phone Number: 6418433833

E-Mail: mdehart@whancock.org

HHS Visit Date: 03/10/2026

Licensing Period: 05/01/2025 to 05/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 12/02/2025

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:

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

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HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday		8:30 AM to 11:30 AM	
Tuesday		8:30 AM to 11:30 AM	
Wednesday			
Thursday		8:30 AM to 11:30 AM	
Friday		8:30 AM to 11:30 AM	
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			25		25
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

An unannounced annual visit was made to the West Hancock 3 Year Old Preschool program on 03-10-26 where I met with Sarah Kirschbaum, and Michelle DeHart. Michelle DeHart is the school principal and director for the program, and Sarah Kirschbaum is the lead teacher in the classroom. Both are well qualified for the positions they hold based on their education, experience, and on-going training. The program is operated as a non-profit program owned and overseen by the school. While the school does have several preschool programs only the 3 year old classes are subject to DHHS Licensing Standards. The 3 year old preschool is offered in two sessions with one meeting Monday & Tuesday AM, and the other Thursday & Friday AM. There are 20 children enrolled in the program between the two sessions. All aspects of the program subject to Licensing Standards were reviewed during the visit.

The program returned to the original classroom after a temporary relocation the previous year. The classroom does have a restroom available directly from the programming space so that children do not need to leave the room. An additional sink is available in the classroom which can also be used for handwashing. Windows along the exterior wall provide ample natural light, a view of the outdoors, and one also serves as a secondary emergency exit. The room was observed to be clean with no concerns related to maintenance. The room is divided into activity centers through the placement of furniture, shelves, and play structures. Each center was stocked with a supply of materials that were observed to be in good condition and appropriate to the ages of the children present.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

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Good interactions were observed on the day of my visit with class following the planned schedule and lesson plan. During the time of the visit the class moved from self-directed center play, to a teacher lead group activity, and snack. During the time that the class was engaged in self-directed play Sarah did move between the groups of children as means to provide supervision, address behavioral concerns, and engage in learning by talking with the children about their play and reviewing concepts such as numbers, colors, shapes, and patterns. Sarah has a very positive and energetic approach to interacting with the children. When speaking to the children she used calm and positive tones and word choices. This combined with proactive behavior management techniques of routines, transition activities, positive recognition, and guided problem solving was very effective in that there were no behavioral concerns observed on the day of the visit.

Good health and safety practices were observed on the day of the visit. As noted the classroom does have a sink available in the classroom and each child was directed to wash their hands following restroom use, and prior to snack service. Sarah also ensured that each child washed their hands and did so in an effective manner sending several back to rewash as needed. While the school custodial staff are primarily responsible for the cleaning and maintenance of the facilities Sarah did clean and sanitize tables as needed prior to food service. Chemical cleaners, personal items, and other items that could pose a safety risk to children were stored in areas where they were not accessible to the children. Response plans were present for children with identified allergies and health concerns. The school does have a nurse that maintains health information, medications, and administration of health care related needs. One other issue that was noted is that Sarah did have raw beans that were present in an experience table. It was reviewed that the use of beans is not recommended given that they contain natural proteins that if ingested in their raw state can have a toxic effect and these should be disposed of.

Due to the limited hours of operation meals are not served but snacks are provided. The children take it in turn to bring snacks to share. A recommended list of healthy options is provided for parents. It was reviewed that while a planned menu cannot be developed given that it is unknow what parents would provide a copy of a "menu" of actual served items is required to be maintained. This can help to ensure that credible snacks are being provided, and help to track down information if a child has a negative reaction to any given snack. A limited supply of items are maintained to supplement if needed. Good food storage practices were observed with snacks consisting of pre-packaged single serving options.

The program makes use of a playground located in a fenced inner courtyard area. The playground has a preschool climbing structure which was observed to be in good repair. Foam tiles are used for fall surfacing. Prior reports noted that the foam tiles are beginning to curl and separate at the edges and will need to be monitored for either replacement or realignment to reduce the risk of being a tripping hazard. Another area with a tunnel climber and balance beam is present and uses rubber mulch is use for fall surfacing. A good depth of material was present. The playground also has grassy and paved areas where the children can play. A storage shed was present where additional toys and materials can be stored.

In reviewing administrative records and documentation the required notices for No Smoking, Consultant Contact, License Certificate, and Mandatory Child Abuse Reporting were present an posted in an area readily accessible to parents and visitors Other required postings for emergency evacuation, emergency numbers, handwashing, and daily schedule were posted. A copy of the menu of served snacks was not being maintained, nor was a copy of the planned curriculum posted though one was available for review. In reviewing children's files the program does use the school enrollment and data maintenance system which includes all required information for emergency contacts, authorizations, physicals, and immunization records. The school nurse confirmed that she had obtained physicals for the children. In reviewing the staff file for Sarah the school did not maintain copies of the background checks as part of their practices to ensure compliance with confidentiality records. It was confirmed that both checks had been completed when she received her teaching license in 2024. It was reviewed that the SING check would need to be renewed later in the year on the date of her employment anniversary, and the FBI check in 2028 and that documentation of both should be retained to verify that they are completed as required. All required inspection logs and certificates were available and current with the exception of Fire & Tornado evacuation drills which were not conducted and/or logged for December 2025, or January and February 2026. It was reviewed that these are required to be practiced and documentation maintained for both drills for all sessions each month. It was further reviewed that while the program can include those done by the school they do not need to sound the alarm for each practice drill to avoid disrupting the school programming. The center parent handbook was reviewed and several policies were missing from the most recent revision.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

109.4(1): Written policies on: Enrollment and discharge. Field trips and non-center activities. Discipline/Behavior/Biting.

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Nutrition. Health and safety policies. Transportation if applicable. Assurance people do not have unauthorized access to children at the center. Protecting children's confidentiality.
-- The program makes use of a policy handbook for the 4 year old preschool, and general school district policies but Licensing Standards do require additional policies. Policies for Transportation, Incident Reports, Biting, Confidentiality, and Emergency Plans were missing. Policies regarding Discharge, Staff Training, and Access were referenced in the general district handbook but need to be updated to include missing elements that are specific to the preschool program.

109.10(13)b: Emergency instructions, phone numbers, and diagrams for fire, tornado, and flood shall be visibly posted and documented at least once a month for fire and tornado. Records shall be maintained for current and previous year.
-- Emergency drills were not logged for each month as required. Both fire and tornado drills must be practiced and logged for each month for both sessions of the preschool. The program can count those drills conducted as building wide drills when alarms are sounded. For those months when the school as a whole does not practice drills the alarms do not need to be sounded.

109.13(1 and 2): Center shall serve each child a full, nutritionally balanced meal as defined by CACFP guidelines.Staff shall provide supervision at table during snacks and meals.Children at center two hours or longer shall be offered food of not less than two hours and no more than three hours apart unless child is asleep.Menus shall be made available to parents and kept on file with substitutions noted.Avoid foods with high incident rate of causing choking.
-- A copy of a menu/calendar/list of snack items that are provided needs to be maintained.

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

A list of required policies with guidance suggestions on implementation was provided.

Sarah was informed of the needs to document drills, and snacks and stated she would ensure that those were maintained going forward.

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: 03/16/2026

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**.