



Health and
Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Unity Ridge Early Childhood Center

Provider No.: 6319

Address: 1004 1st Ave S, Suite B, Denison, IA, 51442

County: Crawford

Director's Name: Cassie Reimers

On-Site Supervisor:

Phone Number: 7123932002

E-Mail: cassie.reimers@unityridge.org

HHS Visit Date: 04/29/2026

Licensing Period: 04/01/2026 to 04/01/2028

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 10/14/2025

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

- ☐ PTO
- ☒ Licensing Visit
- ☐ Drop In
- ☐ Administrative Change

License Type:

- ☒ Full
- ☐ Provisional

Quality initiative:

Quality Rating: 1

- ☐ Accreditation

Program Duration:

- ☒ Year-Round
- ☐ School Year
- ☐ Summer Only



CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

HOURS:	<u>Year-round</u>	<u>School-Year</u>	<u>Summer Only</u>
Sunday			
Monday	6:00 AM to 5:30 PM		
Tuesday	6:00 AM to 5:30 PM		
Wednesday	6:00 AM to 5:30 PM		
Thursday	6:00 AM to 5:30 PM		
Friday	6:00 AM to 5:30 PM		
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

- ☒ Infant(0-<24 Months)
- ☒ Toddler
- ☒ PreSchool
- ☐ School Age
- ☐ All Ages

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	8	14	44	34	100
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

An unannounced licensing visit was made to Unity Ridge Lutheran Preschool on 4/29/26. The building is locked and there is a secure entrance. The preschool is located in Zion Lutheran Church in Denison, Iowa. It serves infants to preschool-age children. Cassie Reimers became the director in July 2024. Cassie has her Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education. She has been working with children since 2013 with 10 of those as an elementary school teacher. Forty-seven children are enrolled. I met with Cassie during my licensing visit.

Observation of room:

Thirty-seven children were present at the time of my visit. There are four programming rooms. All of the children appeared to be having fun. All of the rooms were in ratio. The rooms look nice and have a fun variety of age and developmentally appropriate toys and equipment. The toys are rotated frequently. The children were having fun playing. Staff had excellent interactions with the children. They were positive and attentive to the needs of the children. There were bouncers and exersaucers that they use no more than 15 minutes at a time. Toys in the infant room are sanitized twice a day. The daily sheets looked good. The toddler room was on a walk. The toddler room has four centers and they rotate every 1-2 weeks. Staff noticed an improvement in children's behaviors once they started rotating toys more frequently. There were no lesson plans in the infant room. There were lesson plans in the toddler room but they were not posted. However, Cassie reported they are normally posted. It was reported that the lesson plans are in Brightwheel at the end of the day. In the three-year-old room, children's art was posted on the door and in the hallway. In the four-year-old room, the staff were interactive and were very excited about teaching. The program they use for infants and toddlers is Mother Goose Curriculum and Experience Curriculum and the program they use for preschoolers is Creative Curriculum which is bought through the school. They also use a religious curriculum. Staff work together to develop lesson plans. They also do some faith-based activities such as praying, rhymes, etc. All of the rooms provide a newsletter with updates and pictures on the Brightwheel



CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

App on a weekly basis. Daily notes are sent home for preschool students. Sheets in all rooms are washed at least weekly, and more often, if needed. Please post handwashing signs in all of the restrooms.

Nutrition:

The center has a contract with the school. The center provides breakfast, lunch, and snack. Breakfast and lunch are prepared by the school. Menus are posted in the room, a copy is sent home to the parents, and it is posted on Brightwheel. The center is on the federal food program. Thermometers are placed in all refrigerators/freezers. Please make sure proper food storage is being used. All food needs to be sealed in an airtight container and labeled after opening.

Health and safety:

Cassie reported all appliances are electric so no fuel burning inspection is required. Monthly fire and tornado drills are practiced and documented. Every room has emergency diagrams and phone numbers posted by the phones. Radon testing was done in August 2022 and the scores were in the acceptable range. Additional tests were done in December 2025 and they were all in the acceptable range. Radon testing is due every five years if the scores are below 4.0 pCi/L. The center uses Purell Surface. The dwell time for sanitizing is 30 seconds and the dwell time for disinfecting is two minutes. The center was following the correct sanitizing and disinfecting procedures and is using the three-step bottle procedure: 1. Soap/water for cleaning, 2. Water for rinsing, 3. Your EPA and child care approved product for sanitizing and disinfecting. Hard surfaced toys are sanitized daily and soft toys are washed weekly. The hard surfaced toys are deep cleaned weekly in the sanitizer in the kitchen. Cassie dispenses all medications, but there are two other staff members who are medication certified. They are locked in a tacklebox and the tacklebox is locked inside a cupboard. They follow proper medication procedures. Every room has a first aid kit. There were separate garbage cans for soiled diapers and other waste. In the preschool room, there is risk of cross contamination. The sink used for handwashing is also used to fill water bottles. Please make sure the sink is used for either handwashing or anything related to eating and drinking. Cassie said they would use it as a handwashing sink and fill the children's water bottles at the fountains in the hallway. In the infant room, staff did not wash a child's hands after diapering. I will make a referral to the Child Care Nurse Consultant to review diapering procedures and the times when children's hands are to be washed.

Playground:

The center has a playground that is located at the back of the school/church. It is fenced and has some playground equipment. There is a climbing structure, toys, balls, and riding toys. Monthly playground inspections are completed. Pea gravel is used for fall surfacing.

Transportation:

The center doesn't provide daily transportation services.

Administrative records:

Seven children's files were reviewed and only two were complete. Five files were missing the dentist's name and/or number, one was missing a current physical exam, one was missing permission to secure emergency treatment in the event of an emergency, and one was missing a list of people allowed to pick up the child. Please review all children's files and update them to meet HHS standards. Two staff files were reviewed and neither was complete. One was missing CPR/first aid and their physical exam and the other was missing mandatory child abuse training. Please review all staff files and make sure they are current with all of their training, physicals, and background checks. It is strongly recommended that the center obtain an on-site supervisor to assist Cassie with any areas she may need assistance. It also provides for someone to be in charge when Cassie is gone.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

Cassie is enthusiastic and proud of the program. The staff had excellent interactions with the children. The center is IQ4K Level 2. Newsletters are sent to the family weekly. Pictures of the children and quick updates are posted daily. Cassie identified the center's strengths as the children's safety is always first, they stay in ratio at all times, and they are providing for and meeting the children's needs. The center participates in the TEACH and WAGE\$ program.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

109.7(2): Center directors and all staff have the required contact hours of training. Two staff files were reviewed and neither



CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

was complete. One was missing CPR/first aid and their physical exam and the other was missing mandatory child abuse training.

109.9(2)d: All files contain sufficient information and authorization to allow the center to secure emergency medical and dental services at any time child is in center's care. Seven children's files were reviewed and only two were complete. Five files were missing the dentist's name and/or number, one was missing a current physical exam, one was missing permission to secure emergency treatment in the event of an emergency, and one was missing a list of people allowed to pick up the child.

109.10(6): Children's hand washing: Center shall ensure staff assist children in personal hygiene. I observed a staff member changing a child's diaper in the infant room and the child's hands were not washed after diapering. Children's hands should be washed immediately before eating or participating in any food service activity, after using the restroom or being diapered, and after handling animals.

109.12(1): Program structure that uses developmentally appropriate practices and written program of activities planned to the developmental needs of children served. Program complements but does not duplicate school curriculum. Schedule of program is posted in a place visible to parents. The infant room did not have lesson plans. The toddler room had lesson plans but were not posted.

109.13(5)b: Sanitary and safe methods in food preparation, serving, and storage sufficient to prevent transmission of disease, infestation, and spoilage are followed. Staff preparing food that have injuries on hands wear protective gloves. Staff serving food use clean serving utensils and have clean hands/wear protective gloves. One of the sinks was being used for handwashing and filling children's water bottles. This is a risk for cross contamination. Handwashing should occur at a sink that is designated for handwashing. Food prep or filling water bottles should be at a sink designated for food prep.

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

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

A full license is recommended for 4/1/26 to 4/1/28.

Targeted Assessment Behavior Management

I discussed with Cassie her oversight of behavior management related to helping childcare staff: 1. Understand expectations, 2. Managing frustrations, 3. Monitor performance. Cassie communicates with staff on how to handle specific children's behaviors. She meets with staff individually on a regular basis. Staff ask for help, if needed. There are always two staff in each room so one can take a quick break or seek assistance from another staff member, and they have cameras in each room.

I made a referral to the Child Care Nurse Consultant to work with the center on appropriate diapering procedures and children's handwashing. I also made a referral to CCR&R about possible behavior management classes. There are four kids that need to be evaluated and they would also like general suggestions for behaviors in the toddler classroom.

Based upon an Exception to Policy, there are three children approaching 18 months that are being permitted to join their older siblings in the 3-year-old room with a ratio in that room being 1:6. This ETP expires on 7/31/26 and the director will have to return to the prior age groups in 109.8(2).

Date: 05/01/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Tausha Bottorff



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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>.