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

Name of Center: HACAP Head Start - Northwest **Enrollment:** 16 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 25058

Street: 230 10th St NW **City:** Cedar Rapids Iowa **Zip** 52404 **County:** Linn

Mailing Address: 230 10th St NW, Cedar Rapids, IA, 52404

Director's Name: Sherry Shrader **Phone Number:** 319-221-1484

On-Site Supervisor(s): Sherry Shrader **E-Mail:** cregan@hacap.org

Date(s) of Visit: 04-22-2025

X **Licensing Visit** X **Unannounced Visit** **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 **State** X **Local** **NA** **Is Fire Inspection Approved?** X **Yes** **No** **NA**

Date Inspected: 01-25-2024

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 NAEYC NSACA Other X NA

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

Get-Well Evening Care Special Needs

SCHEDULE: X Year-round School-Year Summer Only

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General			32		32
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 06-01-2025 to 06-01-2027
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons **Date:** 04-28-2025

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

Not applicable

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

HACAP Head Start (HHS) – Northwest has been in operation for many years. This program includes two separate classrooms. Room 1 is an extended day, extended year classroom. Room 2 is a part-day school-year only classroom. Each classroom serves a combined-age group of children aged 3 to 5-years-old. Current enrollment is 16 children.

Multi-site HHS early childhood program executive director is Christi Regan. Ms. Regan has a BA degree in elementary education with early childhood reading, has been employed with head start for over 20 years, and continues to participate in much child development related training. HHS - Northwest's site specific combined director/on-site supervisor is Sherry Shrader. Sherry Shrader has a BA degree in early childhood education, over 3 years experience working with children and continues to participate in much child development related training.

On 4/22/2025, program space was observed.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

HACAP is a community action agency currently providing head start services throughout 9 Iowa counties. HACAP began in 1968 serving families in Johnson, Jones, and Linn Counties. From 1973-1981, HACAP expanded to provide services in Benton, Iowa, and Washington Counties. Then, in fall of 2020, HACAP again expanded to provide services in Delaware, Dubuque, and Jackson Counties. Specifically, HHS - Northwest is located in a predominately urban neighborhood and has been in operation for several years.

HACAP's mission and goal is "...helping people develop skills to become successful and build strong communities..." and "...to bring about a greater degree of social competence in the young children..."

HHS has community support and operates under a Board of Directors. HHS has the following website for families and the community to learn more about the program: http://www.hacap.org.

HHS has a history of participation in quality initiatives including QRS/IQ4K, national accreditation, and local quality initiatives.

Executive management of HHS has remained consistent. This program's management team (e.g. Ms. Regan, Ms. Shrader) has systems of organization in place to help ensure administrative items are completed as required and maintained in a confidential manner. Management is knowledgeable of licensing guidelines as well as their own program's policies and procedures.

Since the last monitoring visit, HHS - Northwest has retained seasoned staff. Staff reported celebrating 29 years, 12 years and 2 years of employment with HHS. Staff longevity continues to be inspiring! All staff have at least a CDA and/or are working towards a CDA. Many staff have advanced degrees in education and early childhood development. Documentation indicates that employees often complete annual professional growth training that exceeds Iowa Code requirements.

HHS has a Parent Committee, Policy Council, and bilingual family support workers. Since the last review, this program obtained a new family support worker who is shared between two local HHS childcare locations. There are parent boards with required postings, community resources, and program reminders. There are additional posting areas for community resources in the area of nutrition, upcoming area events, skill building, and community involvement opportunities. Family involvement is highly encouraged including participation in the HHS Parent Committee, family/program conferences and family events.

Since the last review, HHS acquired the property and underwent a name change. HHS - Northwest (formerly known has HHS - Olivet) is now located in a building owned and operated by their agency. Building also holds the HHS Market and the property continues to support a local community garden experience. The community garden is now fully enclosed by a fence, is further supported by ISU and local Master Gardeners, and is a source of enriching gardening experiences for HHS - Northwest children (e.g. seed planting, child friendly garden tool with belts, watering cans).

Building and grounds are being maintained and updated. A monthly facility checklist is completed. HHS does have a maintenance team which assists with building projects and repairs as well as also helps ensure program space is sanitary and hazard free each day. HHS - Northwest has access to the on-site kitchen to dish wash and keep food warm. This program receives food service from Meals on Wheels.

HHS participates in an annual all site shutdown week in order to prepare for each new academic year. Classrooms continued to be arranged in a thoughtful manner with learning at the forefront. Furnishings and materials are child friendly and in good repair. Children's accomplishments (e.g. newly created handprint stepping stones for the garden) were observed to be displayed in several areas of the building. Creative Curriculum is the primary curriculum with goals to move online for enhancing teaching strategies and project approach. Curriculum also incorporates guest speaker events (e.g. community guest readers, police pal).

HHS programs have emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. HHS sites have successfully navigated through Linn/Jones County flood events, 2019 winter Polar Vortex, 2019 health (covid-19) pandemic, 8/10/20 Derecho Storm, 2021 food supply issues, 2022 infant formula shortages, 2023 air quality alerts and 7/19/24 global technology outage.

HHS - Northwest collaborates well with many community partners including local area access, local school districts, local businesses, CCR&R and health professionals. There is also a partnership among all HHS sites that allows for the sharing of staff training, ideas and resources.

Each child is engaged in a daily health check upon arrival for early detection of apparent illness, communicable disease, unusual condition or behavior which may adversely affect the child or the group. HHS has policies and procedures in place for hand washing, diapering, cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting. Cleaning checklists and daily sanitation reminders were observed in various areas of the center.

On the day of the monitoring visit, child-teacher planted flowers greeted visitors outside the main entrance. Then upon entering the building, one could smell the aroma of a fresh pancake breakfast (pancakes with syrup, fruit and milk) throughout the center. Areas of study included "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle". Children were observed to have access to an array of materials that encouraged innovative play. Activities observed were many (e.g. outdoor play, center play experiences). Center play experiences included sensory fun with play dough, painting, and home living-imaginative play. Staff were nurturing and provided a companionable presence allowing children to have many choices in their play experiences. Staff were observed communicating with children verbally, using picture cues, and through sign language. Routine transitions (e.g. restroom breaks, clean-up, breakfast/food service rituals) worked smoothly into the program's welcoming and cooperative play environment. Staff were overheard engaging with children in meaningful discussion, encouraging social graces, and using positive redirection when needed. Great encouragement from staff to help each child find an open space for individual side walk chalk work! Children responded well to staff and appeared to be truly enjoying their day.

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

109.11(4)a. Centers must have a 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 square feet per child. The outdoor area must: (1) Be free from litter and unsafe materials and free from contamination by the drainage or ponding of sewage or storm water. (2) Include safe play equipment and an area of shade. (3) Include fencing to protect from bodies of water and vehicular traffic.

- Significant areas of mud on the outdoor playground were observed from the bottom of building downspouts to the sidewalk. Improve drainage away from the building.
- Replace the dilapidated table on the outdoor playground with some additional areas of seating for children and staff to

better explore items in nature and enjoy various activities outdoors (e.g. book reading at a table, leaf collecting and comparing).
- Improve outdoor safety with better fencing (e.g. privacy fencing, higher fencing). On the day of the licensing visit, persons were observed leisurely walking around the building's sidewalks, parking lot and around the building's market area. All of these areas are very accessible to and visible of the childcare's outdoor play area. A large truck was also observed to arrive into the parking lot, adjacent to the outdoor play area with children openly playing, for unloading of items.
- Obtain an outdoor shed on the playground for storage of outdoor loose materials (e.g. balls, hoola hoops, side walk chalk).
- Obtain a wheeled cart and/or wheeled wagon to increase safety procedures when transitioning from the building to the community garden area with materials and children.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Please discontinue the usage of play materials to try to deter children from accessing the areas of poor drainage/mud as it seemed to actually attract the children to that area.

Increase classroom storage areas (e.g. shelves) for better organization of materials and to more easily rotate materials between classrooms.

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

*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.