Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Lyon County Head Start

Provider No.: 30253

Address: 302 S Lincoln St, Rock Rapids, IA, 51246

County: Lyon

Director's Name: Kendra Rensink

On-Site Supervisor: Amanda Sandbulte

Phone Number: 7124722153

E-Mail: krensink@midsioux.org

HHS Visit Date: 03/24/2026

Licensing Period: 04/01/2025 to 04/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 12/18/2023

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		8:00 AM to 12:30 PM	
Tuesday		8:00 AM to 12:30 PM	
Wednesday		8:00 AM to 12:30 PM	
Thursday		8:00 AM to 12:30 PM	
Friday			
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

On March 24, 2026, I arrived for an unannounced visit at the Lyon County Head Start program. The morning was quiet, and the building—designed specifically for preschool-aged children—stood bright and inviting against the early spring light. Inside, I was greeted by Onsite Supervisor and Lead Teacher, Amanda Sandbulte. Ms. Sandbulte, who holds a Bachelor of Science degree with a focus on early childhood development, carries a calm confidence that comes from many years of working with young children. Much like her, many of the staff at this center have been with the program long-term, lending a strong sense of continuity and commitment to the families they serve. Lyon County Head Start operates under Mid-Sioux Opportunity, Inc., serving children ages three to five, Monday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. This year's enrollment is 16 children, with 15 present during my visit

I observed all areas of the center—classrooms, activity spaces, nutrition practices, health and safety procedures, playground, and administrative operations.

The classroom was lively and full of color, with learning aids covering the walls: shapes, colors, weather icons, and the alphabet. Children's artwork adorned the room, giving it the warm feel of a space where creativity is encouraged and celebrated. During my time there, I observed several activities, including a circle-time routine before lunch. Ms. Sandbulte wrote a child's name on the board, and the group eagerly identified the letters together. Once recognized, the chosen child went to wash their hands before heading to the table. The transition was smooth and respectful; each student gathered a plate, napkin, and silverware and then waited patiently for lunch. Throughout the meal, staff offered gentle guidance with pouring milk, serving food, and modeling appropriate mealtime behavior. The children were engaged, cheerful, and clearly excited about learning. The positive energy in the classroom was unmistakable.

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The center is arranged with multiple learning areas for free play, each offering opportunities for exploration and development. Toys and materials were in good condition and are sanitized daily. The program uses the GOLD Standard Curriculum, an evidence-based early childhood framework that focuses on social-emotional growth, language development, cognitive skills, and hands-on learning experiences.

Medication is stored securely in a locked box inaccessible to children. Child files were reviewed and found to be up-to-date and well organized. The kitchen area is located in a separate room; it was clean, orderly, and followed appropriate sanitation practices. Staff and children consistently washed their hands as required. Menus were posted and aligned with CACFP nutritional guidelines.

Monthly fire and tornado drills are conducted regularly, and the documentation was detailed and easy to follow. Furnace and Fire Marshal inspections are current and up to date. First aid bag is equipped with necessary items to address minor injuries and includes all emergency information for each student who attends this center. Radon testing has been completed and is within normal limits

Outside, the adjacent playground offered a safe and inviting space for outdoor play. Monthly inspection records were well maintained, and the surface area featured rubber tiles to reduce injury risk. Children have access to slides, climbing structures, a playhouse, and a sandbox, with shaded areas available as needed.

The center is well organized, and staff appeared to have strong, positive relationships with both children and families. I also observed genuine teamwork and communication among staff members. The room carried a peaceful rhythm, the kind that comes from thoughtful guidance and clear expectations. Students navigated their schedule with ease, showing they were familiar and comfortable with the structure of their day.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

The program holds parent-teacher conferences every spring and fall, giving families a clear picture of how their child is growing and learning. They also strengthen family connections through home visits, bringing support and communication directly into each child's environment.

The staff create a welcoming, positive atmosphere where children feel encouraged to explore, learn, and grow.

This center has earned a level 3 IQ4K certification. A Level 3 IQ4K certification means the program has met all quality standards for Levels 1–3, demonstrating strong classroom practices, staff training, family engagement, and a commitment to continuous improvement. This level of quality is especially important because it helps ensure children learn in an environment that is safe, nurturing, and thoughtfully designed to support their growth.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

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

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

Targeted assessment: Behavior Management

I discussed with Ms. Sandbulte her oversight of behavior management, particularly how she supports staff in understanding expectations, managing moments of frustration, and monitoring performance. She shared that the staff are very self-aware and able to identify their own personal triggers. Because they know one another well, they step in naturally to assist when a situation begins to escalate. The team has been trained in PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports), an approach that focuses on teaching positive behaviors, preventing challenging moments, and creating consistent, supportive responses. Staff use these strategies effectively throughout the day. They also understand that taking a brief step away is sometimes necessary, and they feel comfortable communicating this need to one another, ensuring that both staff wellbeing

and child safety remain a priority.

A full license is recommended at this time.

At least one visit will be made to the center during the next year.

Date: 03/25/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Leann Steinhauer

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**.