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

Name of Center: Drake University Head Start-Southridge **Enrollment:** 84 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 49507

Street: 1111 E Army Post Rd **City:** Des Moines Iowa **Zip** 50315 **County:** Polk

Mailing Address: 3800 Merle Hay Rd Suite 323 , Des Moines , IA, 50310

Director's Name: Mary Vaske **Phone Number:** 515-271-1854

On-Site Supervisor(s): Regina Nellis-Becke **E-Mail:** mary.vaske@drake.edu

Date(s) of Visit: 04-11-2024

X **Licensing Visit** X **Unannounced Visit** **Off Year Visit** **Administrative Change**

LICENSING VISITS

New Application X **Re-Application** **NA**

Signed Application (470-0722) Received X **Yes** **No** **NA** **Date Signed:** 03-01-2024

FIRE INSPECTION **State** X **Local** **NA** **Is Fire Inspection Approved?** X **Yes** **No** **NA**

Date Inspected: 10-29-2021

Comments : Fire Inspections are due at least every three years.

LICENSE TYPE: **Child Care** X **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.) X 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		19	105		124
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 04-01-2024 to 04-01-2026
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Maggie Gibson, SWIV **Date:** 04-19-2024

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

N/A.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

An unannounced full licensing visit was completed 4-11-24. The assistant director was present through the entire visit.

Southridge Head Start was formally known as Drake Head Start at Oak Academy. Southridge Head Start was given permission to open on 1/17/2018 in their new location at Southridge Mall. Mary Vaske is the Director of this program. Mary has a Masters degree in Speech-Language Pathology as well as a Bachelors degree in this same field. Mary also has a CDA in Infant/toddler. Mary had been employed with Drake Head Start for 14 years, prior to becoming the director of this Head Start. Regina Nellis-Becke is the on-site supervisor. Regina has a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education and several years experience in preschool and childcare settings. Both meet qualifications for their positions.

All areas of the program were observed. These areas observed consisted of classroom observations and activities, nutritional practices, health and safety practices, playground observation, field trip and transportation practices, and administrative review.

Room observations/activities: The center has several enclosed classrooms in two wings/hallways at the mall, both have a secure entrance and are located right next to each other. Two classrooms are for toddlers; children age two. The center will limit both classrooms to eight children, although the rooms have a licensing capacity of 10 and 9 children. Sessions of pre-school/head start vary in times/days. Head start is operated for school year only at this point. The rooms were in ratio, offering a variety of age/developmentally appropriate play centers and toys. Staff were observed to be responsive and nurturing. This center uses creative curriculum, utilizing email and phone to communicate with parents.

Nutrition Practices: Des Moines Public School caters this center and meals/snacks are served family-style in the classrooms. The kitchen at the center was clean.

Health and Safety: There are on-site nurses that manage/administer medications for children attending. Handwashing posters are hung by sinks. First aid kits are available in all rooms. Tornado/Fire emergency exit plans are posted in all classrooms. Radon was tested in August, 2022; all under 4.0 and testing is not due again for five years. HVAC is professionally inspected/maintained. Carbon monoxide detectors are located in each classroom.

Playground: The playground is enclosed by chain-link fencing. There are shade structures which were not yet replaced due to the season. Safety surfacing is pour in place. This playground is separated by ages and is maintained appropriately.

Transportation/Field Trips: NA

Administrative Review: There are fliers regarding mandatory reporting; handbook accessibility; consultant contact, license and no-smoking signs posted. Four staff files were reviewed; all four did not have signed employee-substitute-volunteer statements which the assistant director indicated she would have employees sign right away. There was an employee file missing a physical form. This employee is no longer employed with this agency and administration indicated several efforts to collect the physical had been made. Five child files were reviewed and contained all necessary information.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

Drake Head Start programs have a strong reputation in the community; offering quality programming for children and necessary resources for families. This center is completely renovated and in a good location for families on a bus line.

This program focuses not only on the child, but also on the whole family. The program works well with the families and provides resources and support for the family as well as setting up goals with families and getting children ready for kindergarten.

The staff are invested in the children and providing quality care and education. The staff are professional and nurturing and work well together as a team. The teachers are well educated and have a minimum of a Bachelors degree in early education. Some of the teachers have their Masters degree. The teacher associates have a minimum of a CDA and several have more advanced education.

The center has a strong partnership with the school district, as well as with AEA and Early Access.

The center has a family support advocate at the site, as well as a mental health interventionist on staff.

The center partners with Drake University and master level students come to the center to complete a Behavioral Analysis and will put behavior plans in place for children who might need this.

The center has a Child Assistance Team that meets once a month.

The center has a lending library for families.

The center has a secure entrance.

The center received a five year grant for Behavior Interventionist staff, which will include two mental health consultants and support staff. This is a support for both staff and families. Weekly check-ins take place with staff to discuss how staff are doing as well as to discuss students in the classroom and any concerns. The behavioral interventionist comes into the classroom to observe and offer strategies and develop a plan. The team meets weekly to discuss the plan and any concerns. The center is also able to conduct Microsoft Teams virtual meetings which is convenient for staff. They received an additional grant to add two more staff to this partnership.

The center conducts Dental screening. The nurse conducts an eye exam for each student at the beginning of the school year.

The Drake University Head Start program has created a wellness committee and there is a wellness coordinator at Drake University; this is for staff wellness and the hope is to expand.

The Health Care Institute has offered evening classes for families on health and wellness.

The classrooms are clean and well supplied.

Staff are trained in PBIS.

The program is in the process of getting ready to apply for an IQ4K rating.

The program applied for and received the Governor's STEM grant, which provided the program with 11 different STEM projects for the children.

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

109.9(1)a: All files contain statement signed by staff indicating whether they have a criminal conviction or founded child/dependent adult abuse.
Number not in compliance: 4
Statements were in the files but were not signed; the assistant director indicated that employees would be asked to attest/sign this form as soon as possible.

109.9(1)d: All files contain a pre-employment physical exam report completed within six months prior to hire and at least every three years. Physical exams shall be documented on form 470-5152, Child Care Provider Physical Examination Report.
Number not in compliance: 1

The employee file missing an employment physical is not employed with the center at the time of the review, but had been without providing a physical. Administration indicated efforts to collect this documentation took place; a pre-employment physical is required PRIOR to employment.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

The center is on the food program and is aware of the food program guidelines. The center contracts with a nutritionist and also an RN who works with the CACFP to ensure they are following the guidelines. The West Des Moines school district provides lunch for the children and the center provides breakfast and snacks.

Radon testing is now due every five years if the test is under the 4.0 cutoff. The center last completed radon testing in August of 2022. All rooms tested were below the 4.0 cutoff.

The furnace is inspected annually by the mall who owns the building.

*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.