Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Tri-County Head Start Learning and Community Ctr

Provider No.: 52237

Address: 840-844 W 4th St, Waterloo, IA, 50702

County: Black Hawk

Director's Name: Dr. Robert Welch

On-Site Supervisor: Yolanda May

Phone Number: 3192350383

E-Mail: rwelch@teamtricounty.org

HHS Visit Date: 09/09/2025

Licensing Period: 08/01/2025 to 08/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 11/19/2024

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

- [ ] PTO
- [ ] Licensing Visit
- [ ] Drop In
- [ ] Administrative Change

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

- [ ] Accrediation

Program Duration:

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

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Program Population Served:

- [X] Infant(0-<24 Months)
- [X] Toddler
- [X] PreSchool
- [ ] School Age
- [ ] All Ages

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	36	17	57	0	110
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

On 09/09/25 I made an unannounced licensing visit to Tri-County Head Start Learning and Community Center in Waterloo. I met with Shayla Stevenson, the program manager. I also briefly met with Yolanda May, the on-site supervisor and lead teacher in the infant room. Ms. May has an AA in child development and has worked with Head Start for eleven years. She also previously had an in-home childcare business. The program employs seventeen staff members that work in the rooms. The Head Start administrative staff are also housed in this building.

Priscila Vergara is a family worker. She meets with families in the home to provide support and assist with community resources. Angela Barth is the Head Start Educational Specialist. Dr. Robert Welch is the Executive Director of Tri-County Head Start Programs.

The Tri-County Head Start Learning and Community Center program was given permission to open on 08/28/23. They operate out of a free-standing building. The program is non-profit. It operates Monday through Friday from 6:30 am until 5:30 pm all year round and serves infants through preschool age children. Wraparound services are provided. There are currently 46 children enrolled. The program has a capacity of 110 children.

The program operates out of the following rooms: Cubs (infants aged birth-12 months), Curveball Koalas (toddlers ages 12-18 months), Triple-Play Jaguars (18-24 months), Big League Pandas (two-year-olds), two preschool rooms for children ages three through five-years-old (Lightening Leopards and Fastball Tigers). They are not currently using the Triple-Play Jaguars and Fastball Tigers rooms. They program also has a Great Room for gross motor play. There is an additional classroom in the center that is not being used if the need arises. An inspection of each room was completed. Windows provide natural lighting in the rooms. The rooms are decorated with the children's art projects.

The centers observed on the day of the licensing visit include library, Lego/blocks, table toys, games, puzzles, transportation, art, dramatic play, writing, math, science/discovery, magnets, puppets, sensory table and music. Centers were arranged in a manner that allowed easy movement between activities, but it also allowed for clear supervision by staff members. Materials were in good condition. The materials are located at child level, so they are easily accessible to the children.

I observed several staff personal belongings (backpacks and purses) that were within reach of children. All personal items must be stored out of the reach of children.

There is a bathroom with a toilet and a sink in every classroom except for the Cubs and Koalas. There are diaper changing available in every classroom. Handwashing and diaper changing procedures were posted in these areas. There is a sink in every classroom and handwashing procedures were posted. The infant room also has a sink for food prep.

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The center uses the Creative Curriculum to prepare lesson plans and they complete GOLD assessments. They also complete 45-day assessments, which include ASQ, ASQ-SE and Brigance assessments. Each teacher prepares their own lesson plans. The length of the study depends on the interest level of the children and number of activities associated with the study. In the infant room they set developmental goals for each child and plan activities to achieve these goals. Lesson plans were available for review in each room.

The center works with Central Rivers AEA. They will come to classrooms to work with children who have identified needs. Monthly newsletters are provided to the parents and the program participates in the Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports (PBIS) program in the classrooms. This focuses on the three components, "be safe, be responsible and be respectful". There are several visual cues in the classrooms to help direct the children. I did observe positive redirection and PBIS Methods being used with the children. The program also uses Second Step which is a social-emotional learning program. Let it Begin with Kindermusik was also observed in classrooms.

Daily sheets are maintained on children under the age of two-years-old.

There was a phone with emergency numbers and the program's address and phone number in each of the classrooms. Staff members communicate with each other using two-way radios. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and evacuation diagrams were posted by the main program doors and outdoor exits throughout the center. A daily schedule was posted in each room.

There is a medication box in each classroom in case a child requires medication. Each classroom also has a complete first aid kit.

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. I reviewed documentation of monthly playground inspections. The radon test was completed in July 2023 and is good for five years. Results were within EPA guidelines. The annual fuel burning inspection was completed and no concerns were noted. The program put in a new HVAC system over the summer of 2025. The carbon monoxide detectors are built into the fire alarm system in the ceiling. Outlets were protected. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 11/19/24.

Head Start participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The center provides breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. Meals and snacks are prepared by Head Start staff on site. Kandie Higgins is the cook and Collin Sawyer is the assistant cook. A Head Start nutritionist, Tracey Sauke, makes the menus. Ms. Higgins states they use a three month rotation of menus. There are two industrial refrigerators, two industrial freezers and a milk cooler in the kitchen and thermometers were present. There are three sinks and an industrial dishwasher for all dishes. There are two handwashing sinks. Handwashing procedures were posted. Menus were posted and allergies were confidentially posted. Lunch is delivered to the rooms and the children eat in their rooms. Family style is used for the older children.

The kitchen was observed to be clean and organized. Food items were observed to be stored according to NHSPS guidelines.

The infant room does all their dishes in their classroom using the three step method. There is a refrigerator in each classroom and thermometers were present.

Head Start provides two kinds of formula, baby food and cereal for the infants. If the infant requires a special formula, Head Start will purchase the formula with a doctor's note. Bottles are washed in the infant room.

Head Start provides diapers and wipes for the children. There is a lactation station in the infant room for nursing mothers.

In the infant room a child had a pacifier that had a stuffed animal attached to it. This is not allowed. Another child was in the crib with a pacifier attached to their clothes. A child can use a pacifier in the crib but it cannot have anything attached to it. You must also remove bibs prior to placing children in their cribs.

The center uses bleach and water to sanitize the food tables and disinfect the diaper changing tables. The bleach bottles and soap and water bottles must be clearly and accurately labeled. Some bottles were labeled as sanitizers and they were disinfectants. Some bottles were not labeled at all. I spoke with the staff member who mixes the bleach bottles and she informed me she mixes all the bottles as a disinfectant.

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I observed or discussed diaper changes in the classrooms. In the infant room, one year old room and the two year old room, the staff members left their gloves on while putting on the new diaper. Gloves are considered soiled and must be removed prior to putting on the new diaper and dressing the child. In the infant room the assistant teacher sprayed the changing table with bleach but did not clean it with soap and water first. You must clean the changing tables and food tables with soap and water prior to the bleach.

The Koala and Jaguar rooms only had one garbage can. You must add a second garbage can in these rooms. Soiled diapers must have a separate garbage can with a lid. The Panda room had a separate garbage can for soiled diapers but it did not have a lid.

Cribs are used in the infant rooms and cots are used to nap in the rooms for the older children.

The parent information is located on a hallway wall inside the entrance. The mandatory reporter, childcare consultant and the handbook availability were posted. The license was conspicuously hung. A no-smoking sign was posted at the entrance.

The program has a fenced in play area in the parking lot area of the program. The playground is divided into two areas. Turf is used for fall surfacing in both areas. One area is for infants and toddlers. There is a small piece of climbing equipment with a slide and a small hill for the children to climb. There are also riding toys.

The second area is for the older children. There is a piece of climbing equipment with a slide, a climbing wall and playhouse. There is a music station. There is a concrete bike path for the children that has stops along the path for gas and a grocery store. There are rocking toys, tunnels, and wood stumps. There is a shade structure in each area.

The gross motor room is used when children cannot go outside. There is a small slide in the room that has a fall height greater than 18 inches. This piece of equipment requires fall surfacing. There are other activities, such as large magnets, blocks, games and sensory items on the wall.

Children's files were reviewed at the time of the licensing visit. I reviewed ten children files. Files must contain emergency contact information for the doctor and dentist of each child. The doctor's and dentist's name, phone number and complete street address must be provided. Seven files did not provide any dental emergency contact information. One file did not have an immunization certificate. One file did not have a physical. One file did not list an emergency contact with their name and phone number outside of the parents.

On 04/24/25 I reviewed three staff files at the Tri-County Head Start administrative office. They were in great condition.

I reviewed policy and procedures, staff and parent handbooks. The necessary written emergency procedures and policies were present. Emergency Preparedness Plans have been completed.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

Staff members have terrific interaction with the children. All the staff members were actively engaged in activities with the children. In the infant room they were great at multi-tasking and had good teamwork. They worked on tummy time and had a calm and soothing environment for the children. In the one yea old room the staff member was playing child friendly music and was singing with the children. In the three and four year old room staff members were spread out in the classroom. Staff members were playing games with the children, playing with playdough and other activities. Staff members worked on fine motor skills. Through playing they worked on colors and counting. Staff members were patient and flexible with their schedules. They talked to children about using their words to problem-solve. Staff members modeled good manners and provided the children with praise and encouragement to try things on their own. Staff members took the children outside to enjoy the nice weather.

Several staff members have longevity with the program.

Ms. Stevenson states the staff members have the love and commitment to do things right.

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Ms. Stevenson states she is putting her focus back on "why we do it". She states if staff members think about why they are doing things and it is not just a chore or a routine then the required safety tasks will become important, purposeful and intentional.

Ms. Stevenson states safety is the number one priority.

The program is in a secure building and there are cameras in the program rooms and hallways.

Head Start has developed a specific orientation for new staff members. It is a quality and on-going training course.

The Head Start educational specialist is a PBIS trainer so this helps in training PBIS methods to staff members.

There are family workers available to meet with families and assist them by providing information about community resources. There are also resources in the entrance of the program.

The program has a Facebook page for families.

Staff members complete hearing, vision and dental screenings within 90 days.

Lead teachers make up to three home visits each year. There are times when parents meet at the center instead of the home at the parent's request. These count for the parent/teacher conferences and provide staff members with great insight into the child's life and living environment.

Head Start provides a monthly newsletter to parents.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

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.
Files must contain emergency contact information for the doctor and dentist of each child. The doctor's and dentist's name, phone number and complete street address must be provided. Seven files did not provide any dental emergency contact information.

109.10(3): Infectious disease control: Centers shall establish policies and procedures related to infection disease control and use of universal precautions with handling of bodily fluid. Soiled diapers shall be stored in containers separate from other waste.
The Koala and Jaguar rooms only had one garbage can. You must add a second garbage can in these rooms. Soiled diapers must have a separate garbage can with a lid. The Panda room had a separate garbage can for soiled diapers but it did not have a lid.

109.11(3)a: Center shall ensure that:Facility and premises are sanitary, safe, and hazard free.Sufficient lighting shall be provided.Sufficient ventilation.Sufficient heating.Sufficient cooling.Equipment placed in the program area is maintained so as not to result in injury to the children.
I observed several staff personal belongings (backpacks and purses) that were within reach of children. All personal items must be stored out of the reach of children. In the infant room a child had a pacifier that had a stuffed animal attached to it. This is not allowed. Another child was in the crib with a pacifier attached to their clothes. A child can use a pacifier in the crib but it cannot have anything attached to it. You must also remove bibs prior to placing children in their cribs. The bleach bottles and soap and water bottles must be clearly and accurately labeled. Some bottles were labeled as sanitizers and they were disinfectants. Some bottles were not labeled at all. I spoke with the staff member who mixes the bleach bottles and she informed me she mixes all the bottles as a disinfectant.

109.12(4)b: Each infant and toddler shall be diapered in a sanitary manner as frequently as needed at a central diapering area. Diapering, sanitation, and hand-washing procedures shall be posted and implemented in every diapering area. There shall be at least one changing table for every 15 infants.
I observed or discussed diaper changes in the classrooms. In the infant room, one year old room and the two year old room,

the staff members left their gloves on while putting on the new diaper. Gloves are considered soiled and must be removed prior to putting on the new diaper and dressing the child. In the infant room the assistant teacher sprayed the changing table with bleach but did not clean it with soap and water first. You must clean the changing tables and food tables with soap and water prior to the bleach.

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

N/A

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

A full license is issued. All DHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period.

I met with Ms. Stevenson following my observations in the classrooms and discussed the items that need to be corrected. Ms. Stevenson took notes and said she would correct the items.

I believe the positive administrative oversight is an essential aspect as to why this program runs smoothly. Staff members are comfortable talking to their administrative team and staff members have good communication with families.

Date: 09/09/2025

HHS Licensing Consultant: Becky Frost

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**.