Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Irving Head Start

Provider No.: 30164

Address: 710 Iowa St, Sioux City, IA, 51105

County: Woodbury

Director's Name: Rachael Ostermyer

On-Site Supervisor: Whitney Haberer

Phone Number: 7122020730

E-Mail: cbeatty@caasiouxland.org

HHS Visit Date: 04/16/2026

Licensing Period: 05/01/2025 to 05/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 06/10/2024

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

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

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

Quality Rating: 4

- [ ] Accrediation

Program Duration:

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

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HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday		8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	
Monday		8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	
Tuesday		8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	
Wednesday		8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	
Thursday		8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	
Friday		8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	
Saturday		8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	

Program Population Served:

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General			84		84
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

I completed an unannounced visit to the Irving Head Start program on April 16, 2026. Irving Head Start shares its building with the CCA of Siouxland Shared Vision Program, and both programs operate under the guidance of the on-site supervisor, Whitney Haberer. Ms. Haberer has served in this role since December 1, 2022. She holds an associate's degree in early childhood and is actively working toward her bachelor's degree. Before joining Irving Head Start, she spent several years working with children in a childcare center, bringing a solid foundation of experience to her position.

The building has a secure entry system. Head Start utilizes five large classrooms while Shared Vision uses three. The center operates Monday through Thursday from 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., with early dismissal on Fridays, operating from 6:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. At the time of my visit, 128 of the 140 enrolled children were present. Cameras are installed throughout the building for added safety and monitoring.

I observed all areas of the center, including classrooms, activities, nutrition practices, health and safety procedures, playground, and administrative review.

The center uses the HighScope Curriculum, which focuses on hands-on exploration and encourages children to make choices in their learning. This approach supports independence, problem-solving, and active engagement—skills especially valuable in early childhood development. During my visit, I observed warm and positive interactions between staff and children. In one classroom, children excitedly participated in dramatic play using inflatable guitars, dancing and singing together. Music is woven throughout their day through the Kindermusik program, a structured approach that uses rhythm, movement, and song to support early brain development, language growth, and social-emotional skills. Several classrooms used songs as gentle transitions for bathroom breaks and cleanup, and the children responded with enthusiasm.

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The center encourages family involvement by providing take-home projects. At this time, children were planting seeds that they will eventually take home to cultivate. Each classroom displayed a rich variety of visual learning materials, engaging centers, and children's artwork. I observed center time where children were deeply engaged, using their imagination and sharing creative ideas. Classroom management was positive and nurturing, with staff using redirection in calm and supportive ways. Staff have been trained in PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports), an evidence-based framework that helps children learn positive social behaviors through consistent expectations and encouragement.

This week, the center had all kinds of awesome visitors stop by—like a local plumber, the mayor, firefighters, a police officer, and several other community members. They all came in to talk with the kids and share a bit about what they do, which made the week really fun and exciting for everyone.

Each room displayed photos of children with their families as well as tools to help children identify and express their emotions. Children assisted with cleanup and followed routines well, including brushing their teeth after meals. Throughout the center, staff maintained a warm, encouraging atmosphere.

Storage practices were appropriate, with open food items dated and stored correctly. The freezers and refrigerators were at safe temperatures, each appliance containing a thermometer. Meals are provided through the Sioux City Schools central kitchen and meet CACFP nutritional guidelines. Menus were posted, and tables were sanitized with Purell before meals. The kitchen appeared well organized and very clean.

Medications were stored properly in locked boxes or inaccessible areas, and staff follow appropriate medication administration procedures. Each classroom had a fully stocked first-aid kit, and emergency numbers were posted by every door. Fire and tornado drills are completed monthly. The center has a functioning carbon monoxide detector, and all program areas were clean and well maintained. Radon levels are within safe limits.

Outdoors, the center has a large, fenced in playground with rubber surfacing under the equipment and shaded areas available. When weather does not permit outside play, children can use the indoor gym, which contains a variety of toys, balls, balance beams, and tricycles. Both indoor and outdoor equipment were in good repair. Overall, the environment at Irving Head Start was welcoming, well maintained, and supportive of children's learning and development.

Their goal is to continue to increase enrollment.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

Head Start programs offer a strong foundation of support for young children and their families. Children receive guidance not only from dedicated Head Start staff, but also from additional professionals who help ensure their educational, developmental, and health needs are fully met. These programs also involve family advocates and include home visits, allowing staff to build meaningful relationships with families and better understand each child's unique needs.

This center has earned an IQ4K certification, which stands for Iowa Quality for Kids. It's a statewide quality rating system that helps families understand the level of care and learning a childcare program provides.

Being rated at a Level 4 is a wonderful accomplishment. It means the center goes above and beyond basic licensing requirements and has shown strong commitment to high-quality practices—things like nurturing relationships, a safe and engaging environment, and thoughtful learning experiences for children.
In short, a Level 4 IQ4K rating reflects a program that truly invests in children's growth and well-being. It's something the center can be very proud of.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

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

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5. Special Notes/Recommendations

Targeted Assessment: Behavior Management

I discussed with Ms. Harberer regarding her oversight of behavior management related to helping childcare staff: 1) Understand expectations, 2) managing frustrations, 3) monitor performance. (Then offer one sentence or two about the director's insight, motivation, processes of teaching and monitoring. Perhaps a statement about this being addressed at staff orientation and is a continuous agenda item would demonstrate their commitment).

Ms. Harberer shared that she and her staff work closely together and maintain open, ongoing communication. She frequently steps in to give staff their breaks and checks in on classrooms throughout the day. The center also uses cameras to support observation and ensure a calm environment. Staff are encouraged to speak up when they need a break, and both Ms. Harberer and the Education Coaching staff are available to step in and help ease any tension or frustration. The family advocate is also nearby in the office and ready to assist whenever needed. In the staff office, a sign reads, "When you can't control what's happening, challenge yourself to control how you respond." This message truly reflects the center's thoughtful and supportive approach to managing stress and fostering a positive work environment.

A full license is recommended at this time.

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

6. ADDENDUMS:

- Addendum1: Capacity for this center has increased by 60 preschool age children due to a new funding source for this headstart program

This Addendum is approved by supervisor on 8/31/2026 2:14:41 PM

Date: 04/17/2026

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**.