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

Name of Center: Tri-County Head Start-Lowell **Enrollment:** 43 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 21732

Street: 1707 Williston Ave **City:** Waterloo Iowa **Zip** 50702 **County:** Black Hawk

Mailing Address: PO Box 1050, Waterloo, IA, 50704

Director's Name: Dr. Robert Welch **Phone Number:** 319-433-1900

On-Site Supervisor(s): Jennifer Roberts **E-Mail:** rwelch@teamtricounty.org

Date(s) of Visit: 04-08-2025

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:** 03-12-2025

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

Date Inspected: 09-16-2024

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: Year-round X School-Year Summer Only

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General	0	0	34	0	34
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 05-01-2025 to 05-01-2027
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Becky Frost **Date:** 04-28-2025

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

N/A

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

On 04/08/25 I made an unannounced licensing visit to Tri-County Head Start-Lowell in Waterloo. I met with Jennifer Roberts, the on-site supervisor. She started with the program in November 2015. Ariel Young is the lead Head Start teacher and Taylor Pierce is the Head Start assistant in the Back to Back Classroom (room 9). Diane Bonnette is the lead teacher from the Waterloo School System for the special education children and Kelly Hansen is the Para educator for the Waterloo School System in the Back to Back room. Linda DeBower is the lead teacher for Head Start and Ms. Roberts is her assistant in the Duration Classroom (room 13). Lindsay Lorenz is the lead teacher from the Waterloo School system and Angela Toles and Cindy Weber are the Para educators through the Waterloo School System in Duration Classroom.

I also briefly met with Ashley Caldwell, the program manager. Priscila Vergara is the family worker for Head Start in the Duration room. Angie Hoeppner is the family worker for the Back to Back room. They meet with families in the home to provide support and assist with community resources. Dr. Robert Welch is the director of the early childhood programs operated by Tri-County Head Start. He started in December 2020. His office is in the administration office in Waterloo. Angela Barth is the Education Services Director. She started with Head Start in January 2017.

Tri-County Head Start-Lowell is in Lowell Elementary. They operate out of two rooms. This is an inclusion program. Both classes operate Monday through Thursday. The Back to Back Classroom operates a morning session that runs from 8:15-11:45 am and an afternoon session from 12:15-3:45 pm. The Duration Classroom is a full day class that runs 8:30 am until 3:00 pm. There are currently 43 children enrolled.

An inspection of each room was completed. Windows provide natural lighting. The rooms are decorated with pictures of the children's families, the children's art projects and posters to assist the children with the learning process, such as the alphabet, shapes, colors and numbers. The children's birthdays are posted. There is an area for circle time in each room and each room has a Promethean Smart Board.

The centers observed on the day of the licensing visit include library, blocks, table toys, games, puzzles, transportation, computer, art, dramatic play, listening, writing, math, science/discovery, play dough, 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 were easily accessible to the children.

There is one sink in each classroom. There is a bathroom in each classroom that has one toilet and one sink. Handwashing procedures were posted in all locations. There are also diaper changing stations in each bathroom and diaper changing procedures were posted.

The program uses the Creative Curriculum to prepare lesson plans and complete the GOLD assessments. They use Second Step for social/emotional skills. They complete ASQ assessments on all children and the Brigance Screening tool is used. Activities are based on weekly studies. The Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) program is used in the classrooms. Head Start partners with Central Rivers AEA and they come to classrooms to work with identified children.

Lesson plans were available for review in each room. Monthly newsletters are provided to parents to inform them of studies, activities and special dates.

This program does not participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) but follows the guidelines. In the Back to Back classroom the morning program is served breakfast and lunch. The afternoon class is served lunch and an afternoon snack. The all-day class is served breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. Lowell Elementary prepares all the food for the program. Disposable products are used so dishwashing is not necessary. Family style is not used. Staff members serve the children their meals. Staff members sit with the children at each table to model appropriate behavior and assist, as necessary. Menus were posted in the classrooms.

The program uses Purell Food Surface Sanitizer to sanitize the food tables and disinfect the changing table. The dwell time for sanitizing is one minute and for disinfecting it is five minutes.

Mats are used to nap in the full-day classroom.

There was a phone with emergency numbers with the programs address and phone number posted in each classroom. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and the evacuation diagram were posted by the main program doors in the classrooms. A daily schedule was posted for each class.

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. I reviewed documentation of monthly playground inspections. A radon test was completed in October 2024. The results were within EPA guidelines and are good for five years.

The school is geothermal but they have a back-up gas boiler in case there are problems with the geothermal system. There is not a current inspection of this boiler. Additionally, the school uses gas burning stoves. The fuel burning inspection was completed and no concerns were noted.

A carbon monoxide detector was on site in the ceilings. They are built in with the fire detectors. Outlets were covered. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 09/16/24.

The parent information is located outside of the classrooms. 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. Please update my contact poster with the poster that has my new email address and the new link to the HHS website. If you need a copy of this poster please contact me.

The program uses the school's playground. Poured-in-place rubber is used for fall surfacing. There is a piece of climbing equipment with slides and other activities. There are a couple rocking toys, a tunnel, a playhouse and a music center. There are two shade structures. There are two benches for the children to rest. There is also a grassy area.

Children files were reviewed at the time of the licensing visit. I reviewed 12 children files. Files must contain emergency contact information for the doctor and dentist of each child. The doctor and dentist's name, phone number and complete street address must be provided. There were three files that did not provide any dental emergency information.

One child had an outdated physical. One file had an invalid immunization because it was not on the mandated Department of Health and Human Services form. There was not a pattern of disregard so this will not be cited.

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.

Staff members were amazing. The Head Start teachers and the Waterloo School teachers have a great rapport and work well together in both educating the children while also meeting their different needs. Staff members are flexible with the schedule. If a child is not interested in an activity the group is doing the staff will allow the child to move to a different activity. I observed staff members use the PBIS flashcards as visual cues to show children expected behaviors or the rules. The smart board was used to engage the children in song for counting and other learning objectives. During free play a timer was set and staff members talked with the children about taking turns. They used positive redirection and talked with the children about green choices and red choices. Staff members offered the children choices and encouraged the children to use their imaginations. Staff members were nurturing and attentive. They are truly invested in the well being of the children. They were enthusiastic and provided the children with praise. The children appeared to enjoy their time in the program.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

Staff members have amazing interaction with the children in their classroom. They are patient and focused on meeting the needs of each individual child.

The Head Start teachers and the Waterloo School teachers have a great rapport and team work within the classroom.

Ms. Roberts has really grown as an on-site supervisor and did a great job of being prepared for the licensing visit.

Head Start conducts monthly center safety checklists and monthly classroom safety checklists.

The classrooms are broken into zones so that staff members are spread out to provide careful supervision.

There are several visual cues in the classroom to help show children the schedule, good choices and bad choices and center activity choices.

Lowell Elementary is a secured building.

The children have access to the school nurse if they become ill or injured. They also have use of the school playground and gym.

The Head Start program employs a family worker to go into the home of each family and assist them with support and community resources. This program utilizes three family workers.

The level of education and training of the Head Start staff is exceptional. They exceed what is required to meet DHS licensing standards.

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

109.9(2)b: 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.
Number not in compliance for dental: 3
Information lacking: Files must contain emergency contact information for the doctor and dentist of each child. The doctor and dentist's name, phone number and complete street address must be provided. There were three files that did not provide any dental emergency information.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

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

*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.