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

**Name of Center:** NICAO Head Start & EHS-Clear Lake **Enrollment:** 20 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 33739

**Street:** 1304 4th Ave South **City:** Clear Lake Iowa **Zip** 50428 **County:** Cerro Gordo

**Mailing Address:** PO Box 1627, Mason City, IA, 50402

**Director's Name:** Trena Cox **Phone Number:** 641-494-1891

**On-Site Supervisor(s):** Brenda Pedelty (HS Lead) & Jennifer Keeran (EHS Lead) **E-Mail:** tcox@nicao-online.org

**Date(s) of Visit:** 11-17-2023

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

**LICENSING VISITS**

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

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

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

**Date Inspected:** 09-14-2021

**Comments :** Compliance 10-15-21

**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 X NAEYC NSACA Other NA

**Program Serves:** X 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 | 14 | | 20 | | 34 |
| Summer | | | | | 0 |

**QRS Rating:** 4

| RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE: | |
|---|---|
| X | **FULL** license from 12-01-2022 to 12-01-2024 |
| | **PROVISIONAL** license from |
| | **DENIAL** of initial application |
| | **SUSPENSION** of license |
| | **REVOCATION** of license |

**Licensing Consultant:** Raymond Salsbury **Date:** 11-30-2023

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

NA

**II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:**

An unannounced annual visit was made to the Clear Lake Head Start program on 11-17-23. Breanna Pedelty is a long-term sub acting as the lead teacher for the Head Start class, and Jennifer Keeran is the lead teacher for the Early Head Start class. Both are well qualified for the positions they hold based on their education, training, and experience. This program is located in a free standing building in Clear Lake overseen by a board of directors and operated as a non-profit entity. The center provides Early Head Start and Head Start programming serving children ages 18 months to 3 years of age in the Early Head Start program, and 3 to 4 year old children in the Head Start class. There are currently 22 children enrolled in the center between the two programs. There are 4 teachers and aides, and a cook. All aspects of the program subject to licensing standards were reviewed during this visit.

The general layout and design of the building and classrooms remains the same as in prior visits. The building makes use of two rooms and a common area used as a dining room for the 4 year old class. There are several bathrooms located in the building including in each classroom and the dining area. There is also a changing station in the Early Head Start classroom for those children that are still toilet training or that have accidents. Each classroom has secondary emergency exits that provide direct egress to the outdoors. All exits were observed to be clear of obstruction and opened freely. Each room has windows along the exterior walls that provide ample natural light, ventilation, and view of the outdoors. Each classroom was observed to be clean and in good repair with no safety concerns noted due to maintenance. The classrooms activity centers are created through the use of furnishings, shelves, and play structures. Each activity center was stocked with a good variety of toys and materials that were in good repair, appropriate to the ages of the children present. The rooms are arranged in a way that does not create any blind areas and which did not impede access to emergency exits.

Each classroom had a copy of the daily schedule and lesson plan posted. The curriculum plans are developed independently for each classroom and identify a general learning theme focus. As an example the regular head start classroom had a theme focus of Music and the materials, and activities in the classroom were reflective of that theme. Good interactions were observed during the time of my visit with each teacher being actively engaged with the children either implementing the planned activities or attending to the children's needs. The center makes use of positive support techniques with redirecting children, recognizing positive behavior, and talking with the children about expected behavior. As an example while observing the regular head start class a child wandered away from the group when they were engaged in a teacher lead activity. The teachers responded by having one of the aides work to redirect the child back to the group but did not engage demanding compliance or implementing a consequence.

The center continues to implement good health and safety policies and procedures. Good cleaning practices were observed during the time of my visit. As an example after finishing breakfast the teachers did have the children assist with clearing their dishes, but waiting for children to be out of the immediate area before using chemical cleaners. First aid kits are maintained in each classroom and in the center office and were stocked with items necessary to address most common first aid needs. Chemical cleaners, first aid kits, staff purses, and other items that could pose a risk to children were stored in areas where they were not readily accessible to children. There were no children taking any medications. Allergy response plans are maintained for those that need them.

Meals are prepared on site and the center does participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. The kitchen was observed to be clean with no evidence of any insect or rodent infestation. Good food handling and storage practices were observed on the day of my visit. A menu is posted and provides the children with a good variety of meal options. As noted I was able to observe the breakfast service during the time of my visit which was consistent with the planned menu of bananas, cereal, toast, and milk. Meals are served family style with the children serving themselves and the teachers providing assistance as needed. Measured scoops and other serving utensils are provided. Staff also use food service gloves when preparing, handling, and assisting children serving food items. The teachers do sit and eat with the children to provide assistance and model good eating habits.

The center playground is divided into two areas and enclosed by chain link fencing. One side is used for the younger children in the early head start program and the other for the older children. The missing retaining clips used to secure the fence to the support posts that were identified in the prior visit had been replaced. Wood chips are used for fall surfacing beneath climbing structures in the older age playground and additional wood chips have been added to ensure a proper depth of material. Shade is provided by the building and equipment.

All required notices were posted in an area that was readily visible and accessible to parents and visitors. A review of child files found each to contain all required documentation and authorizations. Staff files are maintained at the central administrative offices for the program and will be reviewed at a later date. All inspections logs and certificates were current and available.

**III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:**

The program is also accredited by NAEYC and also participates in the IQ4K program both of which seek to implement best practice recommendations. The program is currently rated a Level 4 program out of a possible 5 Level scale on the IQ4K program.

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

None cited

**V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:**

A full license will remain in effect at this time. Please provide a written response to the licensing consultant identifying a plan of action to correct and maintain those aspects cited as not meeting licensing standards and identifying an anticipated date of compliance. At least one visit will be made to the center during the next year.

*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.