Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Kidsville Early Learning Center

Provider No.: 19197

Address: 1009 First St W, Independence, IA, 50644

County: Buchanan

Director's Name: Ashley Hocken

On-Site Supervisor: Ashley Hocken

Phone Number: 3193344286

E-Mail: kidsvilledirector@gmail.com

HHS Visit Date: 10/13/2026

Licensing Period: 11/01/2026 to 11/01/2028

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 12/12/2024

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

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

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

Quality Rating: 1

- [ ] Accrediation

Program Duration:

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

Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday	6:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Tuesday	6:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Wednesday	6:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Thursday	6:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Friday	6:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	36	18	55	36	145
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

On 10/13/26 I made an unannounced licensing visit to Kidsville Early Learning Center in Independence. I met with Ashley Hocken, the director. Ms. Hocken has been employed at the center since February 2007 and became the director in September 2026. Ms. Hocken had completed at least two years in college working toward a business degree. I also met with Kelly Walton, the former director. She is continuing to work at the center as an assistant director until the end of the year. Ms. Walton has a BA in marketing and advertising and a minor in communications/public relations. Ms. Walton has the National Administrator Credential (NAC). She has been with the program since February 2016. Tori Joblinske is in charge when Ms. Hocken and Ms. Walton are away from the center. She started with the center in November 2018. She is currently the cook. The center has 40 employees.

Kidsville Early Learning Center is a non-profit program. It has been in operation since 1977 and in its current location since 1996. The center is located inside the Independence Community Schools Early Childhood Education Center and it is located on the Independence Community School grounds next to East Elementary School. The program operates Monday through Friday from 6:00 am until 6:00 pm. It serves infants through school aged children. There are currently 176 children enrolled.

The center has an IQ4K level of 1 that expires on 04/30/27.

The center operates out of the following rooms: infant room (two weeks through 12-14 months), toddler room (12-14 months until 24 months), two-year-old room, three-year-old childcare room, three-year-old preschool room, four and five-year-old room and a school age space. The center also has a four-year-old state voluntary preschool room, but this room is regulated through the Department of Education and not licensed through the Department of Health and Human Services.

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

The three-year-old preschool program operates Monday through Thursday and offers a morning class from 8:15-11:15 am and an afternoon class from 12:00-3:00 pm. Ashley Conklin is the teacher of the three-year-old preschool class. She has an AA in early childhood education. An inspection of each room was completed. All rooms were within ratio during my visit.

Windows provide natural lighting. The rooms are decorated with 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 were posted. The rooms are decorated with pictures of the children and some have pictures of the families. There is an area for circle time in the rooms.

The centers observed on the day of the licensing visit include library, Lego/blocks, table toys, games, puzzles, transportation, computers, art, dramatic play, puppets, writing, math, science/discovery, Play-Doh, woodworking, 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.

There was a phone in each of the classrooms. Emergency numbers and the center's address and phone number were posted in all rooms. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and evacuation diagrams were posted by most of the main program doors and outdoor exits throughout the center. Post the evacuation diagram near the exit to the hallway in the two and four-year old classrooms. A daily schedule was posted in each room.

The three-year-old preschool class primarily uses the Creative Curriculum to develop lesson plans. Ms. Conklin completes the Brigance assessments on the children. The other rooms use the Creative Curriculum and a variety of other resources to develop lesson plans. A lesson plan was available for review in each room.

Daily sheets are being maintained in the infant and toddler rooms. The infant room uses paper copies of the form and the toddler room uses the Playground app to document the mandated areas. The entire center uses the Playground app to communicate with families and send them pictures of the children.

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. I reviewed documentation of monthly playground inspections. Each room does their own playground inspections. The radon test was completed in September 2023 and is good for five years. Results were within EPA guidelines. The fuel burning inspection was completed and no concerns were noted. A carbon monoxide detector was on site and located in the laundry area off the kitchen, in the school age space and the kitchenette of the infant room. Outlets were protected. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 12/12/24.

The program participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The center provides the children with breakfast, lunch and a morning and afternoon snack. Tori Joblinske and Katie Weber share cooking responsibilities. The center uses a five week rotation of menus and there are summer and winter menus. Menus and allergies were posted. Children eat in their classrooms. The children three-years-old and older use family style. The two-year-old children use family style depending on what is being served.

The kitchen was observed to be clean and organized. The kitchen is inspected by the health department every six months. The center uses an industrial dishwasher for the dishes. The dishwasher is inspected and sanitized by Martin Brothers every month. There are also three industrial sized sinks to wash the dishes if necessary. There are two refrigerators, an industrial refrigerator and an industrial freezer. There were thermometers present. There is one handwashing sink and handwashing procedures were posted. Food items were stored according to NHSPS guidelines.

In the infant room, the program offers one brand of formula, cereal and baby food for the infants. If the parents want a different brand, they must provide it. There is a kitchenette in the infant room. There is a refrigerator and thermometers were present. There is a food prep sink. Bottles are sent to the kitchen to be washed and sanitized at the end of the day.

Most rooms use bleach and water to sanitize food tables. The four-year-old classroom also had Purell Food Service Surface Sanitizer in their classroom. Clorox Healthcare Hydrogen Peroxide Cleaner Disinfectant is used to disinfect diaper changing tables. Handwashing and diaper changing procedures are posted in the mandated areas.

Cribs are used for naps in the infant room and cots are used in the rooms for the older children. Owlets are being used in the infant room.

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

In the infant room there was something wedged under the mattress on one side to enable the child to sleep at a slant in the crib. Staff members informed me they had a doctor's note that allowed this because the child was "stuffy". I informed staff members they can never alter how a crib is used, even with a doctor's note, because it is a safe sleep violation. Staff members were thankful to know this information and removed the item under the mattress immediately. I explained that when doctors provide notes, the notes must state a medical reason for doing something and have a start and end date. I am not citing this because staff members thought they had to honor the doctor's note.

I observed and/or discussed diaper changes. Proper procedures are being followed.

Children have access to one of the four outdoor playgrounds depending on the child's age. There is an infant/toddler area, a two-year-old area, a preschool area and school age area. Each area has a grassy area.

The infant/toddler area has a concrete path and a grassy area. There is a shade shelter over the sandbox. There are riding toys, pushing toys, dramatic play equipment, small slides, a sensory table and a basketball hoop. Some of the slides that were on the grass have a height greater than 18 inches and require fall surfacing. These slides should be removed from this area. This was cited in last year's report also.

In the two-year-old area rubber tiles are used for fall surfacing under a piece of climbing equipment that has slides. There is a sandbox covered by a shade shelter and a tree for shade. There is dramatic play equipment, playhouses and a bench for the children to rest. There is a tunnel for the children to crawl through.

The preschool area has rubber tiles that are used for fall surfacing under a piece of climbing equipment that has a slide and other activities. There are half-tires for the children to crawl on or walk across. There is a concrete path for riding toys, a playhouse, dramatic play area, a music center and a pergola shade structure over a sandbox. There is a bench and picnic tables for the children to rest.

The school age area has rubber tiles that are used for fall surfacing under a piece of climbing equipment that has slides and other activities. There are half-tires for the children to crawl on or walk across. There is a concrete path for riding toys, tunnels and a playhouse. There is a sandbox covered by a shade shelter. Trees also provide shade. There is a picnic table for the children to rest. There are basketball hoops.

The parent information is located on a bulletin board 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.

Staff and children's files were reviewed at the time of the licensing visit. I reviewed 20 children's files. They were in great condition.

I reviewed four staff files. 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

The leadership of the program is committed to providing a safe environment for the children. Staff members had terrific interaction with the children in each room. They made the learning environment fun and inviting. Staff members are enthusiastic and it came across in how they taught and interacted with the children. They interacted with the children at their level and offered them choices. They were flexible but maintained a routine for the children. Staff members had great teamwork. They each have jobs and roles within the classrooms and know what to expect from one another. Staff members provided easy to understand and clear directions for the children. They provided the children with praise and a calm environment and used positive redirection when necessary. Staff members change out centers routinely so that children do not get bored. Staff members modeled good manners for the children. They included children in activities and encouraged them to use their imaginations. They provided the children with good handwashing reminders.

The program is in a secure building. The center has cameras in each room, in the playground areas and at the front door.

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

They also installed “lock down” doors in all the rooms. The school has cameras on the outside of the building.

There are pictures of the staff members in the entrance.

The center has a Facebook page.

The center has an IQ4K level of 1 that expires on 04/30/27.

2026 Accomplishments:
Raised funds through a fundraiser to help improve their playgrounds. A local business, Pipestone, hosted the fundraiser for Kidsville and donated the funds.

Purchased new playground surfacing materials for the three and four-year-old playground.

New playground surfacing installation planned for Fall 2026/Spring 2027.

Added new bricks around the outside of the building to improve the appearance and exterior.

Replaced/installed a couple of new windows.

New air conditioner unit for the kitchen.

Continued to focus on improving classroom environments and providing a safe, welcoming space for children and families.

Continued staff development and teamwork to provide quality care and learning experiences.

Painted the three-year-old preschool classroom.

2027 Goals:
Renew their Iowa Quality for Kids (IQ4K) rating.

Complete the new playground surfacing project.

Continue making improvements to the building and outdoor spaces.

Continue updating classroom materials, toys, and learning resources.

Increase staff training and professional development opportunities.

Explore additional fundraising opportunities for future Kidsville improvements.

Continue working toward providing a safe, positive, and high-quality environment for children and staff.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

There are no violations.

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.

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

An administrative change is being made to name Ashley Hocken as the new director and to remove Cyndi Jensen as the on-site supervisor.

Targeted Assessment: Behavior Management:
I discussed with Ms. Hocken her oversight of behavior management related to helping childcare staff: 1) Understand expectations, 2) managing frustrations, 3) monitor performance. Ms. Hocken states they address this at staff meetings. Staff members are told they can call administration for help or yell out the door for help in the classroom and someone can step in so the staff member can take a break. They discuss options to help children, such as behavior charts, encourage the children and let them visually see the positives. Staff members can also bring children up to the office. She states that sometimes children need a small distraction. Ms. Hocke states they schedule staff members fifteen minutes in both the morning and afternoon.

To monitor the situation the center has cameras available in each of the classrooms and on the playgrounds. Ms. Hocken states she can hear from the office if voices become elevated. They also visit rooms, especially if they know there is a child with difficult behaviors.

Date: 10/21/2026

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**.