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

Name of Center: NICAO Head Start-Algona **Enrollment:** 9 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 30259

Street: 613 Diagonal St **City:** Algona Iowa **Zip** 50511 **County:** Kossuth

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

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

On-Site Supervisor(s): Jayce Thompson **E-Mail:** tcox@nicao-online.org

Date(s) of Visit: 09-27-2023

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

LICENSING VISITS

New Application X **Re-Application** **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: 02-24-2021

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 X NAEYC NSACA Other 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			20		20
Summer					0

QRS Rating: 4

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 10-01-2023 to 10-01-2025
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Raymond Salsbury **Date:** 10-03-2023

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 Algona Head Start program on 09-27-23 where I met with the lead teacher Jacey Thompson, and the co-lead teacher Rhonda Cash. Jacey has been the lead teacher of the center since 2018, and Rhonda has over 20 years of experience in early childhood education. The program also has an associate teacher, and a cook. This program is located in a free standing building in Algona and is overseen by a board of directors as one of multiple Head Start locations operated by NIACO . The center provides head start preschool programming for four year old children only. All aspects of the center were reviewed during this visit.

The layout of the center has not changed from previous visits. The center has a centrally located room for the kitchen that creates a U shape around the exterior where the programming takes place. The center was observed to be clean and free of any concerns related to maintenance inside the building. Windows along the exterior walls provide natural light, a view of the outdoors, and ventilation. There is a large set of patio doors that lead to an attached porch and the outdoor playground area and which also serve as secondary emergency egress. The porch was observed to have several boards that have rotted and which are weak. While not presenting an immediate safety concern such that the porch needs to be blocked off from use these do need to be replaced The facility has a basement area that is used as a storm shelter. All emergency exits were observed to be clear of obstruction. It was noted that the fire evacuation route does lead through the playground which is fenced and cable locks were present on the gates. There are 3 gates of the surrounding fencing and the locks were engaged on 2 of the 3 gates. The open gate does provide egress near the back of the building. It was noted that there is a paved area at the exterior of the building which had heaved and settled resulting in substantial cracking and shifting of the concrete. While the egress from the playground would not require the children to cross this area the rear door from the building through the kitchen is also designated as an emergency exit. While the risk as a trip/fall hazard would be more limited to the teachers it is possible that at some point the children may transverse this area and it is an issue that the center may want to explore for repair options such as repaving, or putting down a layer of gravel to fill in low areas. It is noted that this issue was identified in the prior licensing report and continues to be present. Bathrooms are located on one side of the building.

Again the main programming space remains the same as observed in prior reports. The program is arranged so that all activity centers are on the west leg of the U shaped programming area, tables for eating and flat work surfaces along the perpendicular line, and the teacher work desk on the east side of the building. This arrangement focuses child activity to areas that are easily observed and when a child needs to use the restroom or is on the other side a teacher will escort them The activity centers are created by the placement of low shelves and play structures. The shelves are arranged so that they do not create any blind areas. A good variety of toys, and materials were available in each activity center which were observed to be appropriate to the ages of the children and in good repair. The room was nicely decorated with a variety of commercially produced learning concepts postings, the children's art work, and staff created projects.

A copy of the daily schedule and planned curriculum were posted. This program continues to excel in having a positive and engaging environment for the children. Throughout the visit all of the teachers were observed to be engaged with the children either joining in their self-directed play, presenting the planned curriculum, or attending to the children's needs. When engaging in play activities or attending to needs such as lunch service the teachers would talk with the children about the activity and ask questions to help the children explore and develop cognitive growth. Good behavior management

systems were in place with the teachers reviewing the expected routines, implementing transition cues, and redirecting children. One example was a child became upset when a peer took the toy the child wanted and so the child refused to join the group. The teachers did review that the other child had chosen the toy first, offered the child other options, and allowed the child to be upset rather than force the child to join the group. This allowed the child to regain control and join the group for the next activity rather than creating a power struggle that prolonged the situation.

Good health and safety practices were observed during the visit. Good hand washing practices were observed with the teachers assisting the children to ensure that not only did they wash their hands but that they did so in an effective manner. First aid kits are maintained in an area where they are available but not accessible to the children and contain materials necessary to address most common first aid needs. There were no children currently taking any medications or with a diagnosed allergy but the center does have policies in place should it become necessary in the future. Chemical cleaners and other items that could be a safety risk to children were stored in areas where they were not readily accessible to the children. The teachers would wait for the children to be out of the immediate area before using chemical cleaners.

The playground has a residential grade wood constructed slide and swing structure, a geodesic climbing dome, and an airplane frame teeter-totter. Pea gravel is used for fall surfacing and additional material has been added to provide more depth of loose material. The climbing dome did have several cloth strips tied to the bars. It was reported that the children had done this as a self-directed activity related to the current curriculum theme and that they would be removed at the end of the week. The center does have a wooden porch, grassy area, and an area with pea rock where the children can play. The playground is fully enclosed by fencing which was observed to be in good repair. A large mature tree and the building provide shade. In observing the toys that were present all appeared to be in good repair though some were nearing the end of their useful life, and the selection was somewhat limited.

In observing the kitchen area good food storage and handling practices were observed. Breakfast and snacks are prepared on site but lunch is prepared by the local school and shipped in hot/cold holding containers and heated or refrigerated as needed at the center. The kitchen was observed to be clean with no indication of insect or rodent infestation noted. I was able to observe lunch service which is served family style in the classroom. The teachers did sit and eat with the children to provide assistance, and model good eating habits. A copy of the menu is posted and the meal served included orange chicken, rice pears, and carrots.

In reviewing administrative records all required notices were posted in an area readily accessible to parents and visitors. All inspection certificates and logs were available and current with the exception of the Fuel Burning Appliance inspection. The prior inspection was dated 06-27-22 and it was reviewed that the center will need to schedule a renewed inspection prior to the start of the heating season. While the center is still within the first 30 days of operation and working to obtain all required child file information each file did have emergency contacts and authorizations present. Staff files are reviewed at the program central office and independently of center visits and any issues identified will be addressed at that time.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The center does participate in other monitoring programs that include NAEYC and IQ4K that seek to exceed licensing standards and implement best practice recommendations. The program is currently rated a Level 4 program out of a possible 5 level scale for IQ4K.

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

109.11(3)a: Center shall ensure that: Facility and premises are sanitary, safe, and hazard free. Adequate indoor and outdoor space is provided. The outdoor area shall include safe play equipment and area of shade. Sufficient space provided for dining. Sufficient lighting shall be provided. Sufficient ventilation. Sufficient heating. sufficient cooling. Sufficient bathroom and diapering facilities. Equipment, including kitchen appliances, are maintained so as not to result in burns, shock, or injury to children. Sanitation and safety procedures for the center are developed and implemented to reduce risk or injury or harm to children and reduce transmission of disease.
-- The damaged deck planks need to be removed and replaced. The cloth streamers tied to the geodesic climbing dome need to be removed once the related curriculum theme is completed.

109.11(7)c: All centers: Annual inspection prior to heating season of all fuel-burning appliances to reduce risk of carbon monoxide poisoning and shall install one carbon monoxide detector on each floor that conforms to UL Standard 2034.
-- Inspection results were expired and renewed inspection needs to be scheduled prior to the start of the 2023 heating season.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

A full license is recommended 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.