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

Name of Center: Mahaska County Head Start **Enrollment:** 34 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 25019

Street: 1521 Green Street **City:** Oskaloosa Iowa **Zip** 52577 **County:** Mahaska

Mailing Address: 725 W 2nd St, Ottumwa, IA, 52501

Director's Name: Elizabeth Fairchild **Phone Number:** 641-676-7700

On-Site Supervisor(s): Mark Grego **E-Mail:** lfairchild@sieda.org

Date(s) of Visit: 01-08-2025

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:** 01-23-2025

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

Date Inspected: 03-28-2023

Comments : due annually, performed by Mark Neff Oskaloosa Fire Department and SFM Curt Seddon

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 X Other NA

Program Serves: Infants (0-23 mo.) 2 Years X Preschool-Age School-Age

Get-Well Evening Care X 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			52		52
Summer					0

QRS Rating: 3

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 10-01-2025 to 10-01-2027
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Jill Seibert **Date:** 01-23-2025

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

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

Mahaska County Head Start is located in a newly constructed building in Oskaloosa. The center occupies three classrooms in the building which also houses several classrooms of SWPP, and several rooms occupied by the Mahaska County YMCA Childcare (an HHS licensed program). The center is owned and operated by Southeast Iowa Economic Development Association (SIEDA) and provides three Head Start classes to preschool age children. This program was formerly located across town in the Mahaska Preschool Partnership building. The program director is Elizabeth Fairchild. Ms. Fairchild directs several other Head Start programs for SIEDA in southeast Iowa. Ms. Fairchild has been Director of this program for 9 years and is housed in the main SIEDA office in Ottumwa. The program currently has two On Site Supervisors. One On Site Supervisor is Angela Wilson. She has been employed with SIEDA since 2009. She was appointed last year as she is present daily. Mark Grego is the new OSS (October 2023). He was formerly a Family Service Worker for Head Start. Alexis Bell also meets points to qualify as OSS.

On 1/8/25 I made an unannounced licensing visit to Mahaska County Head Start and met with OSS Angela Wilson and other teachers. All program areas were observed on this date. This visit consisted of classroom and building area review and observations of activities, ratios, nutritional practices, health and safety practices, playground observation, field trip and transportation practices, and administrative review. The summer consisted of observation of the rooms, outdoor play area and common areas.

Center Nutrition Practices Observed:

Meals are prepared by YMCA kitchen staff in the building in a commercial kitchen. The children eat in a newly constructed cafeteria area. The kitchen area is across the hall from the cafeteria and contains newer equipment, sufficient storage for center food, and sufficient dish washing capacity to accommodate a program of this size. Posted menus indicate that minimum nutritional requirements are being met. The program is participating in the CACFP program. The center has a Nutrition Assistant as well. If children have food allergies the nutrition aide and cook and all staff supervising the child is aware.

Center Health and Safety:

The center administers prescription and non-prescription medication in accordance with licensing regulations, physician directions, and parental consent. The center currently has appropriate documentation for medication or children with allergies. We reviewed compliance with regulations regarding staff and child hand washing, storage and maintenance of a first aid kit, emergency plans and drills for fire and tornado, environmental testing and the maintenance of any necessary detection equipment, and general regulations regarding safety and sanitation policies and procedures. Allergy action plans should be posted in each room so that staff know how to respond to an emergency.

Carbon monoxide detectors should be present. Radon testing results should be under a level of 4 pCi/L. Updated testing is due every 5 years. The program is now exempt from the possibility of chipping of lead based paint since it was constructed after 1978.

The square footage of the classrooms indicates 24 or 25 children may be in each room. However, Head Start is setting their own capacity at 50 children which is best practice and duly noted. The program is in compliance with rule stating there must be one restroom for every 15 children. All restrooms must have ventilation.

Staff have a hard time attempting to maintain a consistent temperature in the rooms. HVAC work is currently being done in the building.

The program is secured by a locked door. Parents must ring a door bell and be buzzed in.

Director Elizabeth Fairchild and I had contact on 10/17/2019 regarding general ratio and supervision issues and how to best achieve these. Head Start is continuously working with staff regarding active and close supervision. Staff should know name and number of children assigned to them at all times and maintain direct supervision throughout the program day. The program is now serving three year old children in the new building. SWVPP is provided for 4 year old children by the school and the program has shared classrooms. At times ratio cannot be followed due to not having a Family Service Worker or floater in the building to give staff breaks.

Many staff reported children displaying unmanageable behaviors. Staff reported this is the case again this year. Staff indicated they are sending incident reports home each day to parents, so parents are aware of behaviors. The incident reports are being signed by parents. This was discussed at length last year. Incident reporting has improved this past year.

The program has access to a gross motor area down the hall from the classrooms. The area has attached restrooms.

The program has approximately 6 employees. All employees are over 18 years of age. The program is searching for a Family Service Worker to hire.

Center Playground:

The center has a new fenced outdoor play area immediately beside the center. Surfacing beneath the equipment is adequate. The area features commercial climbing equipment. Shade is provided by the building and shade structures. The Child Care Weather Watch is utilized to assess whether outdoor play is appropriate due to questionable weather conditions. Emergency medication, emergency contacts and a first aid kit are taken outdoors with the children. The kits are inaccessible to children.

The program should perform monthly outdoor play area inspections. Children must have at least 75 square feet of gross motor space both indoors and outdoors. This rule must be followed when children are in the gross motor room down the hall.

Center Transportation Arrangements/Field Trips:

SIEDA contracts with 1015 a local transportation service. Walking field trips and any other field trips may be taken with parents signed authorizations updated annually. Groups may take walks around campus which is not considered a field trip. Emergency contacts, emergency medication and a first aid kit are taken on any trips/walks.

Center Administrative Records:

Child misbehavior is addressed by redirection, positive reinforcement of appropriate behavior. The center is in compliance with regulations regarding required notices and postings and required written policies provided to parents in the form of a parent handbook. Staff and child records are examined annually.

Tamara Wheaton, Head Start Administrative Assistant, located in the main Head Start Office in Ottumwa. She does an excellent job of record keeping and provides HHS with staff requirements. She provided me with staff records on 1/22/2025. Staff and child records are complete and well organized. Staff physicals are up to date. Mandatory Reporter training, SING checks, fingerprint checks (4 years) and professional development hours were reviewed. Emergency Preparedness training is due annually. A new plan needs to be written for the new location.

Child files are stored in Child Plus. The family service worker ensures each file contains updated physicals and immunizations. The program is working with parents to ensure updated physicals are acquired.

All required postings including Mandatory Reporter information, HHS License and HHS Licensing Consultant Information. No Smoking signage was also present. Communicable diseases are posted as they arise.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The program is working in cooperation with other area agencies.

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

1. 109.8(2)b: Combinations of age groupings for children between 3 and 5 years of age may be allowed with a staff of 1 to every 12 children. When I arrived the classroom was out of ratio. Staff explained no floater is currently present to allow staff to have restroom breaks, run errands, etc... This leaves the program rooms out of ratio for short periods of time all throughout the day.

2. 109.10(3)a: All medications shall be stored in original containers with physician or pharmacist directions. Labels should be intact and stored so they are inaccessible to children and public. Nonprescription medications shall be labeled with the child's name. The lead teacher in the classroom indicated she would talk to parents about getting a pharmacy label for medication.

109.9(2)g: Any child with allergies, a written emergency plan. Copy shall accompany child if they leave the premises. We printed an allergy action plan off and posted it the day of the visit. CORRECTED

3. 109.10(15)b: Emergency instructions, phone numbers, and diagrams for fire, tornado, and flood shall be visibly posted and documented at least once a month for fire and tornado. Records shall be maintained for current and previous year. Fire and tornado drills were behind. This is likely due to staff not having a floater to give classroom staff time to conduct administrative tasks.

109.10(15)c: Center shall develop procedures for annual staff and volunteer training on emergency plans. Staff should be trained on the EPP and sign and date acknowledgement of such each year. We were unable to find the plan the date of the visit.

4. 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 gymnasium was cold the day of the visit. Staff indicated this is a frequent occurrence and has been the case since the building was constructed. This has been corrected as of 1/20/25.

109.11(3)d: Record of monthly inspections of outdoor recreation area and equipment shall be kept. We were unable to find these during the visit. OSS Wilson agreed these should resume this month.

Should the program need assistance with correcting these issues, they can reach out to either CCR&R or IDPH for assistance.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

HHS encourages you to contact your local nurse consultant. Child Care Nurse Consultants work with child care and early education businesses. Businesses may call or send questions to a child care nurse consultant about health and safety policies, health programs, health of personnel, and specific child health or safety issues. Please visit the following website regarding health forms and postings and other services offered by IDPH Child Care Nurse Consultants: http://idph.iowa.gov/hcci/consultants This program has access to Consultant Mary Mickulecky. CCNC M reported the following services performed this past 6 months:
Visits- 4
Child record review – 20 files.
Special care needs review- all children files.

TA- special care needs care plans- All of them
Diet modification education
Diabetes education
Medication authorization education –

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HHS encourages you to contact Child Care Resource and Referral Consultant Karen Lauer. They offer centers assistance with meeting the DHS regulations, QRS, infant/toddler concerns, room arrangement and environment, developmental concerns, Best Practice information, CDA assistance, or any questions or concerns you may have. The center is aware they may access CCNC and CCR&R Consultant on a consistent basis. Karen Lauer is the consultant for this program. She has provided consultation, observation and forms in the past. Consultant Lauer reported the following services rendered this past year:
• Mahaska Head Start TA's: 29 (Topics: Refer Support to other Program, Business Policies & Practices, Drop off, IQ4K, Emergency Preparedness, and Training Consultation)
• Mahaska Head Start Visits: 2 (Topics: IQ4K and Training Consultation)

Based upon this review, it is recommended that this center remain in Full licensing status. The center is directed to correct violations in a timely manner, then continue to monitor day to day practice and adjust accordingly to continue to ensure licensing rule is met consistently. It is important to note, all HHS 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.