Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Our Lady of Guadalupe Early Childhood

Provider No.: 18744

Address: 2005 Kane Street, Dubuque, IA, 52001

County: Dubuque

Director's Name: Tina Pothoff

On-Site Supervisor: none

Phone Number: 5635562820

E-Mail: tpothoff@holyfamilydbq.org

HHS Visit Date: 09/15/2026

Licensing Period: 02/01/2027 to 02/01/2029

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 10/15/2025

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

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

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

Quality Rating: 2

- [ ] Accrediation

Program Duration:

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

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HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday		6:30 AM to 5:30 PM	
Tuesday		6:30 AM to 5:30 PM	
Wednesday		6:30 AM to 5:30 PM	
Thursday		6:30 AM to 5:30 PM	
Friday		6:30 AM to 5:30 PM	
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General			70	76	146
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

An unannounced licensing visit was completed at this center on 9/15/26. The center director, Tina Pothoff, was present as were other staff. Tina is qualified with an associates degree in early childhood education, National Administrator Credential, and 25 years of experience with this center along with many years of experience prior. Tina states she also plans to begin work on her CDA. This center operates out of several rooms in the Mazzuchelli Middle School building. The center is part of the larger Holy Family Catholic School district. Holy Family has a well-defined administrative structure. All Holy Family programs are not for profit. This center operates on school days only and offers preschool and child care to children who attend this school. The center does participate in the Iowa Voluntary Preschool Grant program. Tina states the center uses the Frog Street and Aliante (spanish) curriculums and school age children is center-based on the children's interests. The center reports enrollment of 145 children at the time of this visit.

The child care building program space consists of five rooms located on the main level of the building;

Art room (room 70, school age child care) = 26 children
Three/four year old preschool / three through five year old child care room (room 72) = 24 children
Fours/fives/school age room (room 75) = 20 children
Fours/fives/school age room (room 77) = 20 children

The program rooms were observed to be well stocked with age appropriate materials to support the programming requirements. Rooms were set up with various learning/activity centers. Rooms were nicely decorated and displayed some of the children's projects. Children also access the gymnasium and the library in the building and the music room upstairs in this building at scheduled times. Program rooms include adjacent restroom areas as well as sinks located within the

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program rooms. Additional nearby hallway restroom areas are also available for the program to use. Required postings and child and staff files were reviewed. The licensing notebook including emergency drills, first aid supplies, playground checklist, radon testing, fuel burning appliances inspections, and policies were reviewed. All program space was observed. Staff and child interactions, food service, hand washing, and naptime practices and procedures were observed. Health and safety practices were also reviewed including medication management, cleaning/sanitizing/disinfecting procedures, excluding ill children/staff, incident reports, and first aid kits.

Nutritional practices and food safety were observed. The center does participate in the CACFP program. The center serves breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack. There is an extra fee charged for breakfast and lunch meals. Meals are prepared in the school cafeteria in the main school building and brought to the child care center rooms. The school kitchen is licensed through IDPH and that license is current.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

The center director is highly qualified as noted above. The center has achieved level two IQ4K, and is submitting for level three. The building is clean and very well maintained. The center continues to be organized and well managed, and the staff appear to work well together even with the addition of some newer staff this school year. The staff were again observed to be highly engaged with the children in all program areas, and the children appeared to be enjoying their preschool experience. Teachers email weekly newsletters and a daily update detailing program activities to parents. Program rooms are well stocked with materials to support program activities including plenty of books which are also organized. The center's licensing documentation and files were again found to be highly organized.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

109.11(3)a: Center shall ensure that: Facility and premises are sanitary, safe, and hazard free.
1. Secondary exit from room 72 is blocked by a chair. Please ensure all exit pathways remain free and clear in the event of an emergency.
2. Dish soap out and accessible on the counter in room 75.
3. Mr. Clean sponge in accessible drawer in room 77.

4. Any corrective action plans, provisional license, and safety plans-steps to get into compliance

N/A

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

Targeted Assessment: Behavior Management
I discussed with (director) their oversight of behavior management related to helping childcare staff: 1) Understand expectations, 2) managing frustrations, 3) monitor performance.
The center director provided the following responses:
1) We spend a lot of time teaching expectations and classroom rules at the beginning of the year. We are consistent and teach and review these every day. For children who struggle we use positive reinforcement and smother them with praise to help them turn their behavior around. We communicate with parents so that we are all on the same page and this helps the children understand that we work together and that helps make the staff feel supported.
2) I make sure to let staff know that we are all in this together and that they can come to me for support whenever needed. Just like children need breaks, staff also need time away from the class to regroup. I am always that person they can call to come into their room so they can go take a break, calm down and reset. It makes a big difference when you can step away from the situation for a minute or 10 minutes to remove yourself before it escalates. When staff start to spiral with the child and the behavior, it is hard to come back, center themselves and continue teaching. A staff's mental health is always as important as the child's so communicating and support are key.
3) Behaviors are a challenge for the child that is being defiant or losing control. It is a challenge for the teacher having to deal with the behavior while also trying to teach the rest of the class and keep them safe physically and mentally. I believe it takes a village and we all work together when a child is struggling. We need to be on it right away and not let it go on. You have to love the child through it. When they feel loved, they feel safe and the behavior can change.

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The center was reminded of allowable age combinations. Three year old children may not be combined with school age children unless under the very specific rule 109.8(2)h for the very beginning and/or end of the day with only the number of children and staff present at the center as defined by the rule. The center will need to ensure they are in compliance.

1. Ensure any counter space/surfaces used for food service/food preparation activities is cleared off and then is properly cleaned and sanitized immediately prior to the activity.
2. Add complete emergency plan postings to the secondary exits of room 75 and 77 (restroom area pathway).
3. Move emergency plan posting so it is next to the door to the hallway in room 75.

The center will continue with a full license. The center is directed to correct the items cited. The report does not require a written response so long as the corrections are obvious. Thank you.

Date: 09/22/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Heidi Hungate

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**.