Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Happy Hearts Montessori Daycare and Preschool

Provider No.: 52590

Address: 8509 Alice AVE, Clive, IA, 50325

County: Polk

Director's Name: Maria Mondragon

On-Site Supervisor: N/A

Phone Number: 5152784262

E-Mail: sujatha.gontu@gmail.com
mondragonm1971@gmail.com

HHS Visit Date: 01/28/2026

Licensing Period: 02/01/2025 to 02/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 08/15/2025

Comments: Clive Fire Marshal. For licensing regulations, these inspections are due every three years. The City of Clive typically do these inspections more frequently. The center also received an Occupancy from the City of Clive in 1/2026 to be able to use the new space after putting up a dividing wall.

Report Visit Type:

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

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

- [ ] Accrediation

Program Duration:

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

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HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday	7:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Tuesday	7:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Wednesday	7:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Thursday	7:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Friday	7:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	24	16	35	0	75
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

An off-year inspection was conducted on 1/28/26. The director was present throughout the inspection.

All areas of the program were observed. These areas observed consisted of classroom observations and activities, ratios, nutritional practices, health and safety practices, playground observation, field trip and transportation practices, and administrative review.

Happy Hearts Montessori Daycare and Preschool is a new program that was given permission to open on 9/5/24. This is a new program located in the old Montessori Children's Center in Clive. Sujatha Gontu is the owner of this program. Maria Mondragon is the director of this program. Maria was the on-site supervisor under the previous ownership and has taken a number of professional development training classes over the years and has many years of experience working in child care.

This program is open year-round and serves children 12 months of age (in the near future) through five years of age. The center uses a Montessori learning curriculum with children. There are four classrooms. The capacity of the two year old classroom is 16 children. The capacity of the three year old classroom is also 16 children. The four/five year old classroom has a capacity of 19 children. The new one year old classroom opening up will have a capacity of 24 children. Total child enrollment is currently 26 children.

During the inspection, the four/five year old children were engaged in free-choice play. Children were divided up and playing at the child-size tables and chairs. In the three year old classroom, all of the children were sitting together at one of the child-size tables and doing art projects. In the two year old classroom, children were also doing art projects. The one

year old classroom is not yet open, but will be in the near future. Toys and other equipment are being cleaned and sanitized daily.

NUTRITION: The center serves an AM snack, lunch, and PM snack to children. All food storage was sufficient. All food items meet CACFP guidelines. The food menu rotates every two weeks. The center has their own kitchen where meals are prepared. Children eat in their classrooms at the child-size tables and chairs.

TRANSPORTATION/FIELD TRIPS: The center does not transport and they do not take field trips other than going to the park from time to time that is directly across the street from the center as well as visiting local businesses. The center also invites different agencies/businesses into the center from time to time for presentations.

PLAYGROUND: The center has a very large fenced-in playground area. There are climbing structures, a garden, large grassy area, and a cement area for riding toys.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

This is a center under new ownership. The owner and the director are organized.

Enrollment is slowly growing indicating a need in the community.

The center does a good jog working with Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R).

There are tenured staff at this center from the previous ownership.

The center continues to have a good partnership with the city of Clive (parks, library, fire department, etc.).

Monthly staff meetings are held.

The playground is fenced in, has large trees for shade, is very large and spacious, and also has a garden for growing their own vegetables.

Over the past year, fresh interior painting has been done and a wall has been constructed to separate the four/five year old classroom from a new one year old classroom that will be opening soon.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

109.9(1)a : One staff member did not have fingerprint results. All staff (including minor staff age 16 and 17) need to be fingerprinted.

109.9(2)i : One child was missing a physical.

109.11(4)a : On the playground, there is one area in the back corner where they wooden fence and chain link fence come together where there is a head entrapment area.

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

The younger staff will get fingerprinted as soon as possible for the director. The director also contacted the parents of the child who needed a current physical during the inspection. The playground will need attended to to close the entrapment area once the weather gets a little warmer.

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

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Radon testing was completed 1/24/23 - 1/26/23. The radon levels came back below the 4.0 cutoff. All three classrooms should be tested moving forward. Because levels were below 4.0, the center can move to testing for radon at least every five years now. So long as radon levels remain below 4.0, they can remain on a five year plan. If at the next testing, levels in any classroom come back 4.0 or higher, the center will have to have a mitigation plan, retest, and at least temporarily move back to testing every two years.

The annual HVAC inspection was completed 10/8/25.

I - Power and IQ4K were discussed at the visit. CCR&R can assist with the IQ4K application if the center is interested in the future. All staff should continue to upload all of their training certificates into their I - Power profiles.

The center may need to update their staff and parent handbooks since they will start serving children 12 months of age in the near future. CCR&R can also assist with room arrangement of this new classroom .

Date: 01/28/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Nate Knepper

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**.