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

Name of Center: HACAP Head Start-Urban **Enrollment:** 24 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 25056

Street: 1328 2nd Ave SE **City:** Cedar Rapids Iowa **Zip** 52403 **County:** Linn

Mailing Address: 1328 2nd Ave SE, Cedar Rapids, IA, 52403

Director's Name: Deidra Benser **Phone Number:** 319-366-7632

On-Site Supervisor(s): Lisa Nagel **E-Mail:** DBenser@hacap.org cregan@HACAP.ORG

Date(s) of Visit: 08-06-2024

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

Date Inspected: 01-05-2024

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.) X 2 Years X Preschool-Age School-Age

Get-Well Evening Care Special Needs

SCHEDULE: X Year-round School-Year Summer Only

HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summary Only*

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General	4	16	20		40
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 09-01-2024 to 09-01-2026
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons **Date:** 08-09-2024

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

Not applicable.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

HACAP Head Start (HHS) - Urban is located inside a building which also provides community services. This program operates year-round offering an early head start (EHS) classroom as well as a head start (HS) classroom. The program serves older infants through preschool-age children. Current enrollment is 24.

Multi-site HHS early childhood program executive director is Christi Regan. Ms. Regan has a BA degree in elementary education with early childhood reading, has been employed with head start for over 20 years, and continues to participate in much child development related training. HHS - Urban's site specific director is Deidra Benser. Ms. Benser is a multi-site director who has been in the position since August 2024. Ms. Benser has a BA degree in early childhood education, has over 10 years of experience working with children at head start, and continues to participate in much child development related training. The program's on-site supervisor Lisa Nagel has a BA degree in elementary education, has 25 years of experience working with head start children, and continues to participate in much child development related training.

On 8/6/2024, program space was observed.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

HACAP is a community action agency currently providing head start services throughout 9 Iowa counties. HACAP began in 1968 serving families in Johnson, Jones, and Linn Counties. From 1973-1981, HACAP expanded to provide services in Benton, Iowa, and Washington Counties. Then, in fall of 2020, HACAP again expanded to provide services in Delaware, Dubuque, and Jackson Counties. Specifically, HHS- Urban is located in a predominantly urban area and has been in operation for several years.

HACAP's mission and goal is "...helping people develop skills to become successful and build strong communities..." and "...to bring about a greater degree of social competence in the young children..."

HACAP has community support and operates under a Board of Directors. HACAP has the following website for families and the community to learn more about their programs including early learning programs: http://www.hacap.org.

HHS - Urban has a history of participation in quality initiatives including national accreditation, state and local quality initiatives and CACFP.

Executive management of HHS has remained consistent. Since the last review, this program did obtain a new multi-site director Ms. Benser. While Ms. Benser is new to this location, she has been with HHS since 2022. The program's management team (e.g. Ms. Regan, Ms. Benser, Ms. Nagel, family support worker) has systems of organization in place to help ensure administrative items are completed as required and maintained in a confidential manner. Management is knowledgeable of licensing guidelines as well as their own program's policies and procedures.

Congratulations to staff Faith on her retirement after over 38 years in early childhood! You impacted a lot of children and

families and you will be missed! HHS - Urban has retained many seasoned staff as well as hired a few new ones. Staff reported celebrating 25 years, 4 years and 9 months with HHS. The longevity is impressive! All staff have at least a CDA and/or are working towards a CDA. Many staff have advanced degrees in education and early childhood development. Documentation indicates employees receive training that exceeds Iowa Code requirements. Ms. Benser discussed having a solid team of employees who are flexible and enjoy their work with children.

HHS has a Parent Committee, Policy Council, and family support workers. HHS - Urban continues efforts at optimal communication between the program/staff and families. In the area between the early head start and head start classrooms, there is a parent board with required postings, community resources, and program reminders. There are additional resources for families in the area of nutrition, upcoming area events, skill building, and community involvement opportunities. There is also an area encouraging parents to become involved in the parent committee. Family involvement is highly encouraged including holding monthly parent committee meetings and conducting annual home visits.

HHS - Urban is located in a building with agencies that provide various community services. Building and grounds are maintained. A monthly facility checklist is completed. HHS does have a maintenance team which assists with building projects and repairs as well as helps ensure program space is sanitary and hazard free each day. Kitchen is organized and sanitary. The program does receive food service from Horizons a Family Service Alliance provider. Ms. Benser discussed future goals to include fresh repainting of the classrooms.

Classrooms continue to be arranged in a thoughtful manner with learning at the forefront. There is an overflowing garden box of flowers adorning the outdoor play space. Staff discussed recent child-program urban garden experiences that went well this season. Materials are accessible to children. Creative Curriculum is the primary curriculum with goals to move online for enhancing teaching strategies and project approach. HHS participates in an annual all site shutdown timeframe in order to prepare for each new academic year (e.g. project building maintenance, classroom cleaning/preparation, professional development).

HHS - Urban collaborates well with many community partners including local area access, local school districts, local businesses, CCR&R and health professionals. There is also a partnership among all HHS sites that allows for the sharing of staff training, ideas and resources.

HHS - Urban has emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. HHS - Urban successfully navigated through historic Linn County flooding events, 2019 winter Polar Vortex, 2019 health (covid-19) pandemic, 8/10/20 Derecho Storm, 2021 food supply issues, 2022 infant formula shortages, 2023 air quality alerts and 7/19/24 global technology outage.

Each child is engaged in a daily health check upon arrival for early detection of apparent illness, communicable disease, or unusual condition or behavior which may adversely affect the child or the group. The program has policies and procedures in place for hand washing, diapering, cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting. Cleaning checklists and daily sanitation reminders were observed to be posted in various areas of the center.

On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were nurturing and attentive to the children's needs. Staff were observed warmly greeting children and families as they arrived for the day. Children had access to materials (e.g. books, imaginative play options, building materials, sensory) that encouraged innovative play. Activities observed were many including gathering circle (e.g. discussion about day's events, one child's trip to the library bringing a book to share) and center play (e.g. food cleaning with tasting element, home living, books) and outdoor large gross motor events. Most noteworthy, were 2 child-HHS program created picture albums highlighting the many learning experiences children enjoyed during the 2023-2024 school-year! These were found in the book center for children to reminisce about their year's work and enjoy. Staff provided a companionable presence allowing children to have many choices in their play experiences. Staff communicated well with children verbally, with picture cues and through modeling. Many words of encouragement and hugs were observed to be shared! Routine transitions (e.g. clean-up, food service/breakfast activities) worked smoothly into the program's welcoming and cooperative play environment. Staff were overheard providing children with many words of encouragement and engaging children in much meaningful discussion (e.g. discussion about day's events). Children responded well to staff and appeared to be truly enjoying their day.

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

None noted.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Please remove the non-functioning water fountain in the head start classroom that's currently covered with a plastic bag. The child sink, adjacent the water fountain, is also showing much ware. Remedy.

The kitchen sanitizer/dishwasher leaks. Remedy.

The classroom flooring is showing much ware. Remedy.

On the outdoor playground, replace the cracked blue slide chute and remedy the area of concrete that presents a small open hole.

A full license is issued. Thank you for the visit.

*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.