Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: NICAO Head Start-Algona

Provider No.: 30259

Address: 613 Diagonal St, Algona, IA, 50511

County: Kossuth

Director's Name: Megan Judish

On-Site Supervisor: Jami Menke

Phone Number: 6414941891

E-Mail: mjudisch@NICAO-ONLINE.ORG

HHS Visit Date: 09/19/2025

Licensing Period: 10/01/2025 to 10/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 02/26/2024

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

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

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

Quality Rating: 3

- [ ] Accrediation

Program Duration:

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

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Program Population Served:

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General			20		20
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

An unannounced annual visit was made to the Algona Head Start program on 09-19-25 where I met with the lead teacher Jami Menke, and the co-lead teacher Rhonda Cash. Jami took over as the lead teacher at the start of the 25-26 school year, and Rhonda has over 20 years of experience in early childhood education. 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. There are currently 8 children enrolled in the center. 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. One leg is used for primary programming, the cross section used for meal service, and the other leg houses the restrooms and teacher work area. The center was observed to be clean and free of any concerns related to maintenance. 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 facility has a basement area that is used as a storm shelter. All emergency exits were observed to be clear of obstruction. Bathrooms are located on one side of the building. The hot water temperatures of the handwashing sinks was measured to be 126.5 deg. F. at the spigot when only the hot water tap was open. Hot water temperatures should be maintained at 120 deg. F. or less as instant scald burns can occur when temperatures exceed 130 deg. F. At the current temperature the center needs to carefully monitor child handwashing to ensure that water temperatures are moderated with cold water until the heating unit can be adjusted to safer levels. Activity centers are created through the placement of furniture and play structures which are arranged so as not to create any blind areas. The activity centers provide discrete play areas that help to limit overflow play and focus the attention of the children in that play area. Each activity center had a good variety of toys and materials which were observed to be in good repair and appropriate to the ages of the children that were present.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

During visit all staff were observed to be engaged with the children presenting the planned curriculum and attending to their needs. The center had a well established curriculum plan which had a Well To School focus with learning classroom routines. During the visit the teachers used a picture schedule to provide a visual aid for students to track the progress of the daily activities moving from individual center play, to lunch, and a group music and movement activity. The teachers were observed to participate in the activities with the children either by asking questions, or modeling interactions and play. Each of the teachers used calm and positive tones when speaking to the children while presenting the planned curriculum and in general conversation. There were a few instances when children were engaging in unsafe behavior where the teachers

would use a sterner tone when redirecting the children. Ratio was maintained in the classroom as required by age with teachers escorting children to the restroom to ensure that all children were within direct line of sight and hearing of a teacher at all times.

Good health and safety practices were observed during the visit 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 contain materials necessary to address most common first aid needs. Response plans were present for all children with identified health concerns. 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 do wait for the children to be out of the immediate area before using chemical cleaners. Tables were sanitized both before and after meal service.

The center does have a full kitchen and all meals are prepared on-site. The kitchen was observed to be clean with no indication of insect or rodent infestation noted. Good food storage practices were in place for both dry pantry and refrigerated items. Good food handling and service practices were observed. Meals were served family style with the children using measured scoops to portion their own plates. The teachers do sit and eat with the children to provide assistance, supervision, and model good eating habits. A copy of the menu is posted and identifies a good variety of nutritious meal options.

The playground has a residential grade wood constructed slide and swing structure, a geodesic climbing dome, and an air plane frame teeter totter. Other toys and materials are present and maintained in a storage shed that are brought out for play as needed. Pea gravel is used for fall surfacing and appears to have been aerated but does need to continue to be monitored as a hard pan layer was again developing in high traffic areas. The center also has a wooden porch and open grassy area where the children can play. The playground is fully enclosed by fencing which was observed to be in good repair. The fence does have several gates which are locked, but one gate was unlocked during the visit given that the emergency exit opens onto the playground. A large mature tree and the building provide shade. All toys, materials, and structures were observed to be in good repair.

In reviewing administrative records all required notices for No Smoking, License Certificate, Mandatory Abuse Reporting, and Consultant Contact were posted in an area readily accessible to parents and visitors. Additional required postings for emergency evacuation, handwashing, emergency contacts, schedule, and curriculum were also present. While the center is still within the first 30 days of operation and working to obtain physicals and immunization records each child 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. All inspection certificates and logs were available and current.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

None Cited

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

NA

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

A full license is recommended at this time. At least one visit will be made to the center during the next year.

Date: 09/29/2025

HHS Licensing Consultant: Ray Salsbury

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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**.