Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Sun Ridge Head Start

Provider No.: 50812

Address: 4701 Stone Ave, Sioux City, IA, 51106

County: Woodbury

Director's Name: Rachel Ostermyer

On-Site Supervisor: Angela Messina-Lundeen

Phone Number: 7122244757

E-Mail: rostermyer@caasiouxland.org

HHS Visit Date: 06/15/2026

Licensing Period: 07/01/2025 to 07/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 07/03/2025

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

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

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

Quality Rating: 4

- [ ] Accrediation

Program Duration:

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

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HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday	7:30 AM to 5:30 PM		
Tuesday	7:30 AM to 5:30 PM		
Wednesday	7:30 AM to 5:30 PM		
Thursday	7:30 AM to 5:30 PM		
Friday	7:30 AM to 5:30 PM		
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	8	16			24
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

I completed an unannounced visit at the Sun Ridge Early Headstart program in Sioux City IA on 06/15/26. I was able to speak with the on-site supervisor, Angela Messina-Lundeen. Angela has a Bachelor of Science degree and many years of experience working in childcare. She shared that she recently completed TPOT training. This training teaches staff how to observe classrooms and support teachers in using positive strategies that help children develop social and emotional skills. By completing this training, Angela is able to watch how classrooms run, talk with teachers about what she sees, and offer guidance to help improve daily interactions with children. Her training adds to her skills as a supervisor and supports the center's overall quality

This center is located on the WITCC campus in a wing of one of the apartment buildings, making it convenient for families. The Early Head Start program has three separate classrooms and serves children from infancy to age three. The program has expanded its hours to better support working parents and is now open from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. All classrooms are on one floor and share a kitchen where meals are prepared.

The areas observed consisted of classroom observations and activities, nutritional practices, health and safety practices, playground observation, field trip and transportation practices, and administrative review. There are 22 children enrolled in this program and 22 children present at my visit.

When I arrived, some of the children were outside in the playground area. They were in the correct staff-to-child ratio, and the staff had their first aid bag with them. I also observed smooth classroom transitions as groups took turns going outside. The children followed the routine well and knew what to do when coming back inside. They went directly to get a drink and wash their hands, and staff supported the process in an organized and calm manner. The playground has a shaded area, and

water was available for the children. The equipment was in good repair, and staff were actively engaged and playing with the children. The visual aids in the classrooms help support children's learning by giving them clear pictures and reminders of important concepts. Items such as alphabet posters, number charts, color and shape cards, and family photo boards help children build early language, math, and recognition skills. The picture-based daily schedules also help children understand routines, follow directions, and feel more confident about what comes next. These visual supports make learning easier for young children and help them stay engaged throughout the day. The center uses the High Scope curriculum, which is a research-based, play-focused approach to early learning. High Scope supports children's development by giving them hands-on experiences and encouraging them to make choices throughout the day. Staff help children learn by asking open-ended questions, guiding problem-solving, and supporting children as they explore materials and activities. The curriculum also includes consistent daily routines, such as "plan-do-review," which help children build confidence, independence, and strong thinking skills.

The center participates in the food program and follows all CACFP guidelines. Food items were properly labeled and stored, and good food-safety practices were observed in the kitchen area. The program also clearly identifies children with allergies by posting each child's picture along with a description of their specific allergy. This information is placed where all staff can easily see it to ensure children's safety during meals and daily activities.

I also observed appropriate diaper-changing procedures during my visit. All sunscreen and diaper creams were properly labeled. The center's discipline practices include time-out, PBIS, Tucker Turtle, and talking with children to help resolve problems. PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) is an approach that teaches and encourages positive behaviors by using clear expectations, consistent routines, and supportive guidance. I also noted a posted list of options for staff on how to handle conflicts and redirect children, which provides helpful reminders and promotes consistency across classrooms.

The center's first aid kit was stocked and appropriate for treating minor injuries. Fire and tornado drills were documented each month as required. However, there was no current documentation of fuel-burning equipment inspections or radon testing available at the time of the visit.

Angela reported that the center is preparing to begin the recertification process for Level 4 in the IQ4K quality rating system. She stated that the program is now experiencing more stability with staffing and that she has a team of employees who are committed to staying long-term. This stability supports consistency in care and helps the program maintain high-quality practices.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

The center is currently rated at Level 4 in the Iowa Quality for Kids (IQ4K) system. This level reflects that the program meets high standards in areas such as staff training, learning environments, family engagement, and program leadership. A Level 4 rating shows that the center uses strong, consistent practices to support children's development and maintains a well-organized, high-quality program.

Head Start also provides support to families through home visits, allowing staff to check in with parents, offer resources, and help strengthen the connection between home and the program. In addition, I observed that the center sends home simple projects for children to complete with their parents. These activities encourage family engagement, support learning at home, and help parents stay involved in their child's development.

The center is bilingual, which provides important benefits for the children and families it serves. Children are exposed to both English and Spanish throughout the day, helping them build early language skills in both languages. This supports stronger communication, increases understanding during routines, and helps children feel comfortable and included. For families who speak Spanish at home, bilingual staff and materials make it easier to communicate, stay involved, and feel connected to the program. Overall, the bilingual environment supports learning, promotes inclusion, and strengthens relationships with families.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

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109.11(8)b: Centers at ground level that use basement area as program space, or have a basement beneath program space: Testing and plan for remedy of radon is conducted.

109.11(8)c: All centers: Annual inspection prior to heating season of all fuel-burning appliances to reduce risk of carbon monoxide poisoning and shall install one carbon monoxide detector on each floor that conforms to UL Standard 2034.

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

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

Targeted Assessment: Behavior Management

I discussed with Ms. Messina-Lundeen her oversight of behavior management related to helping childcare staff: 1) Understand expectations, 2) managing frustrations, 3) monitor performance.

Angela explained that all staff have been trained in PBIS, which stands for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. PBIS is a framework that helps staff teach and encourage positive behaviors by using clear expectations, consistent routines, and supportive guidance rather than punishment. This is the approach staff use when any discipline is needed in the classrooms.

Angela shared that she is regularly in and out of the classrooms, observing interactions between staff and children as well as interactions among staff members. The program also holds monthly staff meetings where concerns, ideas, and strategies can be discussed. Staff reported that they feel comfortable asking for help when they are feeling frustrated or need additional support. Each classroom is also equipped with cameras, which Angela uses as another tool to observe practices and offer feedback or suggestions as needed.

A full license is recommended at this time at this time. Please email this consultant the necessary documents by 08/01/26.

At least one visit will be made to the center during the next year

Date: 06/15/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Leann Steinhauer

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**.