Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Mary Elizabeth Child Care & Preschool

Provider No.: 30099

Address: 814 Court St, Sioux City, IA, 51105

County: Woodbury

Director's Name: Jane Heider

On-Site Supervisor: Heidi Kramer

Phone Number: 7122581605

E-Mail: meccp814@gmail.com

HHS Visit Date: 08/20/2026

Licensing Period: 09/01/2025 to 09/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 11/05/2025

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

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

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

Quality Rating: 1

- [ ] Accrediation

Program Duration:

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

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday	6:00 AM to 5:45 PM		
Tuesday	6:00 AM to 5:45 PM		
Wednesday	6:00 AM to 5:45 PM		
Thursday	6:00 AM to 5:45 PM		
Friday	6:00 AM to 5:45 PM		
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General			41	43	84
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

On 08/20/26, I completed an unannounced licensing visit at the Mary Elizabeth Daycare Center and Preschool. I met with the director, Jane Heider, who holds a Bachelor of Arts degree and maintains her NAC (National Administrator Credential), which reflects advanced training in early childhood program leadership and administration. I also spoke with onsite staff member Heidi Kramer, who has an associate degree in early childhood education and is currently completing coursework toward her bachelor's degree. Both Heidi and Jane have significant experience working with young children and demonstrate strong knowledge of developmentally appropriate practices.

Mary Elizabeth Daycare Center was the first childcare center established in the area and has been in operation since 1914. It is recognized as a local historical landmark. The center includes five program spaces: a dining/school-age room, a preschool room located on the second floor, a two-year-old room, a large motor room, and a three-year-old classroom. The program operates Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. and serves children ages 2 years through school age. The center currently has 32 children enrolled, with 22 children present during the time of my visit.

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

The center participates in the Preschool Initiative, a program designed to support high-quality early learning experiences for preschool-age children. This initiative focuses on developmentally appropriate instruction, strong teacher–child interactions and preparing children for a successful transition into kindergarten. Ms. Kramer has been approved to teach in this classroom, and her training and education align well with the expectations of the initiative. The center provides designated learning areas throughout the classrooms for children to explore and engage in activities, including spaces for toys, books,

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Legos, and dramatic play. Each room contained a sufficient amount of age-appropriate toys and learning materials, all accessible to children. Daily schedules were posted in each classroom, and child-sized furniture was available to support comfort, independence, and smooth transitions. The center uses Creative Curriculum, a research-based early childhood curriculum that supports learning through exploration, hands-on activities, and developmentally appropriate practices. It emphasizes responsive teaching, intentional routines, and meaningful play experiences. The program also utilizes ECERS (Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale), a nationally recognized assessment tool used to evaluate and improve classroom quality. ECERS helps guide classroom setup, materials, interactions, and overall best practices to ensure a high-quality learning environment. The center incorporates STEAM activities that encourage children to explore science, technology, engineering, and math through hands-on experiments, building projects, and problem-solving play. During the visit, I observed positive interactions between staff and children. Staff engaged with children at their level, gently redirecting them as needed and supporting them in staying on task. It was clear that staff have built strong relationships with the children, as the children easily used staff members' names, asked questions comfortably, and demonstrated trust. The center follows a consistent routine and schedule, which provides structure and helps children feel secure throughout the day. The staff at Mary Elizabeth Daycare are highly dedicated to the program and the children they serve. Although the center operates in a historical building, which can make updates or renovations challenging at times, they continue to create a positive, welcoming, and developmentally supportive learning environment for all children.

The center participates in the CACFP food program. Lunches are purchased through the Sioux City School District, while breakfast and snacks are prepared onsite. The playground includes two separate areas—one for older children and one for younger children. During the visit, concerns were noted regarding the climbing area, specifically the need for additional fall-surfacing material and repainting of the benches. The center does not provide transportation; however, during the school year, the Sioux City School District transports children as needed. First aid kits were stocked appropriately for treating minor injuries, and monthly fire and tornado drills have been completed as required. Playground inspections have been completed. Radon has been checked and within the normal limits. Annual fuel burning inspection was completed.

Looking ahead, the center's goals for the upcoming year include increasing their IQ4K level and expanding enrollment.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

The center maintains a strong connection with the Sioux City School System and has developed positive working relationships with local elementary school teachers. This collaboration supports children's learning and smooth transitions between childcare and school. Examples of this partnership include sharing information to support individual children's needs, coordinating routines and expectations to help children adjust to kindergarten, and communicating about developmental or behavioral concerns when appropriate. These relationships help ensure continuity of care and strengthen support for children as they grow.

The center assists families by connecting them with local community resources. Examples include referring parents to early childhood programs, guiding them to local health or dental clinics, helping them access food or clothing assistance, and providing information on community mental-health or parenting support services. These connections help families feel supported and ensure children receive the care they need both inside and outside the center.

The center is currently rated at IQ4K Level?1, which reflects that it meets Iowa's licensing standards and has completed the foundational quality requirements in areas such as staff training, family engagement, nutrition and safety planning, and positive guidance practices. This level shows the center is committed to building quality and continuing to grow within the IQ4K system.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

109.7(2): Center directors and all staff have the required contact hours of training.

109.9(2)d: All files contain sufficient information and authorization to allow the center to secure emergency medical and

dental services at any time child is in center's care.

109.9(2)i: Preschool (for children five years and younger not enrolled in school): Physical exam report submitted within 30 days of admission, was obtained no more than 12 months prior to admission, is signed by a licensed MD, DO, Chiropractor, PA, or ARNP, and contains health history; present health status including allergies, medications, and acute/chronic conditions; and recommendations for continued care if necessary.

109.11(4)a: Center must have safe outdoor program area adjacent to the center, with sufficient square footage to accommodate at least 30 percent of the enrollment capacity at any one time at 75 spear feet per child. Outdoor space must: Be free from litter and unsafe materials and free from contamination by the drainage or ponding of sewage or storm water. Include safe play equipment and an area of shade. Include fencing to protect from bodies of water or vehicular traffic.

There are some safety issues on the playground. They have several wooden benches that need to be painted due to peeling paint. There is also not enough mulch by climbing structures. A referral has been made to CNC consultant for assistance.

109.13(5): Centers shall ensure that food preparation and storage procedures are consistent with the recommendations of the CACFPs.

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 Heidi her oversight of behavior management related to helping childcare staff: 1) Understand expectations, 2) managing frustrations, 3) monitor performance.

Heidi reported that she and Jane have been trained in PBIS and use its strategies consistently throughout the center. Both are frequently present in the classrooms, and staff know they can ask either of them for assistance whenever needed. Heidi and Jane model positive guidance techniques and support staff in using effective redirection strategies. They also keep quick-reference PBIS cards on hand, which offer simple ideas for helping children calm, refocus, or transition—similar to flash cards that staff can use in the moment.

Please provide consultant with an email confirming that those items that fall blow standards have been completed by 11/30/26. Please let this consultant know the plan regarding the playground equipment fall area.

A full license is recommended at this time at this time.

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

Date: 08/20/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Leann Steinhauer

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

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**.