Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Richardson Head Start

Provider No.: 21182

Address: 1020 34th St, Fort Madison, IA, 52627

County: Lee

Director's Name: Matthew LeClere

On-Site Supervisor: Diana Hopp

Phone Number: 3193722038

E-Mail: matthew.leclere@caofseia.org

HHS Visit Date: 03/26/2026

Licensing Period: 03/01/2026 to 03/01/2028

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 02/03/2025

Comments: with the Fort Madison Fire Department (Chad Hannum) conducts the inspection annually.

Report Visit Type:

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

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

Quality Rating: 3

- [ ] Accrediation

Program Duration:

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

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HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM		
Tuesday	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM		
Wednesday	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM		
Thursday	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM		
Friday	8:00 AM to 5:00 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	12		19		31
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

Richardson Head Start is located in a modular building on the grounds of Richardson Elementary School in Ft. Madison. The building is divided by a short entryway into two sections, the traditional preschool age Head Start program and an Early Head Start program for infants and toddlers. The center is owned and operated by Community Action of Southeast Iowa, a not for profit community action corporation. The director is Matt LeClere. Director LeClere was formerly a school principal and educator and has 26 years experience in education. He took this position in 2020. He directs several Head Starts/Early Head Start programs in the southeast Iowa area for Community Action of Southeast Iowa offices in Burlington. This site has two on-site supervisors. The on-site supervisor for the preschool age program is Diana Hopp. Ms. Hopp has a BA in Early Childhood Education, a Child Development Associate degree, and 30 years of experience in Head Start programs.

On 3/26/2026, I made an unannounced licensing visit to Richardson Head Start and met with OSS and other staff members. At the time of the visit, staff were actively engaged in providing the Head Start programs to the children. I have phone contact with Director LeClere throughout the year. The visit consisted of classroom and building area review and observations of activities, ratios, nutritional practices, health and safety practices, playground observation, field trip and transportation practices, and administrative review.

The building is located in the rear of an elementary school building with front entrances facing the road. The programs can only be accessed by first entering the front doors. When a visitor arrives they must enter the front door, as all other doors are locked. Head Start and Early Head Start staff will greet visitors at the front entrance. Every child must be signed in by the parent or authorized adult.

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Program Observations:

Both classrooms are clean, bright, attractive and equipped with a satisfactory variety of child sized furniture, equipment, toys, games, and activities for the children. Both classrooms are self-contained with their own restrooms, food preparation areas, and outdoor exits. Both classrooms offer full day Head Start programs to the children enrolled. The preschool age Head Start classroom employs Creative Curriculum. Interest centers available to the children include: blocks, children's literature, dramatic play, toys and games, puzzles and small manipulatives, art, music and movement, science and discovery, sensory tables, and computer area.

The Early Head Start building contains a Library Center, small tables and chairs. Upon entering the building to the right there is a small area with chairs and tables for the children to sit and do art projects and eat lunch. The building is cooled by window air conditioners and a ceiling fan. The infant area contains a small refrigerator.

Large Windows line both the front and back of the building providing ample natural light. We discussed Safe Sleep practices. The building has a back door exit. A hand-washing sink is located next to the changing table, which faces the children. The dining area would benefit from a ceiling fan to circulate air in this room.

The Head Start building is open with an ample amount of natural and fluorescent lighting. Window air conditioning is provided. Air quality and room temperature was adequate the day of the visit. It features an open area for circle time, a desk area for staff, a computer center, a small kitchen area with play food, refrigerator, toaster, coffee pot, babies, and a dress up area. Musical instruments are provided, as well as other hard surface toys, a globe, puppets and many more adequate equipment. The preschool room is full of storage that is crowding usable square feet space. The area has been measured to ensure each child has a minimum area of 35 square feet of usable floor space. Storage space, kitchen space and teacher space cannot be counted. A microwave and full sized sink is in this room in a kitchen area. The preschool room has chipping paint around the window sills.

Center Nutrition Practices Observed:

Meals and snacks for the center are prepared at the Eichacker Center kitchen and catered to the center. Breakfast is prepared at the center by center staff. Meals are served in the classrooms family style and menu patterns indicate that minimum nutritional requirements are met. The Early Head Start area has a small kitchen for infant meal and bottle preparation. A large refrigerator is in the meal preparation area. Thermometers were located in the unit. No open food items were found. Dry food was not stored on the floor, but in cabinets. No expired food items were observed. Dry food was stored adequately and closed if previously opened. Breast milk was labeled and stored appropriately. A Food Allergy Alert was posted in kitchen areas in both parts of the building.

A microwave and dishwasher as well as another sink is located in the food preparation area. This area is not accessible to children. Staff sit with children at child sized tables. Napkins were provided.

Food waste containers were covered. Two thermometers were located in the refrigerator/freezer area. Cold food was stored adequately. Dry food was stored in cabinets and cupboards. All kitchen areas were observed to be clean. Meal Attendance Sheets, which were complete. Denise Mahoney is the center nutrition specialist and has many years experience in this role.

Center Health and Safety:

Policy and procure are in accordance with rules regarding medication storage and administration. The center administers prescription and non-prescription medication in accordance with licensing regulations, physician directions, and parental consent. A quiet/sick area is designated as the "library area". Medication is kept in a high cabinet out of reach of the children. All medication had an intact pharmacy label and documentation to accompany it. Any medication should be dispensed by staff who have taken the medication administration course.

Storage and maintenance of a first aid kit were compliant. A clearly marked First Aid Kit was on top of the refrigerator. A mobile backpack first aid kit was kept by the exit. In the Early Head Start area I observed three First Aid Kits (two in the main room) one by the exit.

Compliance with environmental testing and the maintenance of any necessary detection equipment were reviewed. All electrical outlets were covered. Radon testing has been completed in the past five years with results under 4 pCi/L.

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Updated testing is due every 5 years. Both buildings are on city water so a water analysis is not required. The buildings were constructed in the 70s therefore do not require lead based paint testing. An HVAC Preventive Maintenance Inspection was completed annually as required on the two electric heaters. Heat to the building is provided through vents attached to the bottom side of the wall that do not get hot to the touch.

We reviewed and discussed compliance with general regulations regarding safety policies and procedures. Cleaners are located in the bathroom in a cabinet or in high places inaccessible to children.

Staff belongings are stored in a locked cubby in the entryway and a locked cabinet in the food preparation area. Ratio was met and maintained the day of the visit.

Regulations regarding emergency plans and drills for fire and tornado were reviewed. Documentation indicating both drills had been completed monthly were present.

Staff have their own restroom area children occasionally might utilize if they are potty training. Hand washing posters were noted. A separate small laundry room contains a washer and dryer. A gate should be added to this area so that children cannot access it. A work order has been requested. New flooring was placed in these areas which greatly improves the room appearance a few years ago. Storage is also present in this room as well. The area was clean.

Sanitation policies and procedures were reviewed. Toothbrushes are stored in a netting and were appropriately spaced in the holder. A chart was next to the toothbrushes with documentation of toothbrush holder cleaning and the dates. The center is utilizing Oxivir TB as a disinfectant.

A diaper changing station was observed to be clean and free of clutter. The center has separate containers for soiled diapers and other garbage. I observed staff wearing gloves when necessary. All food waste containers were covered. Hand washing posters were by the sink. The paper towel dispenser was appropriate.

The center is in compliance with regulations regarding child and staff hand washing. Hand washing routines on both sides of the building were followed per protocol.

Center Playground:

The center has separate outdoor play areas for toddlers and preschool age children in front of the center. Both areas are fenced but lack natural shade. The building provides some shade during certain hours of the day. The toddler play area has low, climbing and activity toys. The preschool age area has a large, anchored, metal/plastic climbing and activity toy and tricycles. Both play areas are completely cushioned by rubber matting. Several other plastic climbing toys were located in the area.

A small shed is located within the play area for extra storage. New storage bins were purchased this past year as well as a bench and cabinetry.

I observed a Daily Playground Safety checklist that was complete. It remains the program's responsibility to ensure the playground meets standards put forth by the US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) in the "Public Playground Safety Handbook" (which can be accessed online at the following website: http://www.cpsc.gov. The Child Care Weather Watch is utilized if outdoor play is questionable due to varying weather conditions. Staff state the maintenance person, Michelle Stanford typically fixes anything they need quickly.

Center Transportation Arrangements/Field Trips:

The center provides no transportation for children to or from the daily program. A school bus vehicle owned and operated by Community Action of Southeast Iowa is used for field trip transportation only. Maintenance logs for the vehicle are kept at the main site. The handbook contains 10 Bus Rules in relation to pick up and departures to and from Head Start.

Center Administrative Records:

Child misbehavior is addressed by modeling, verbal reminders of appropriate behavior, and redirection. The center is in compliance with regulations regarding required postings and notices and required. Staff and child files are complete and

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well organized. The Emergency Procedures Guide, First Aid, the Fire/Tornado Drill Report (which was completed), Universal Precautions, and Emergency Contact Information were posted in the Toddler room inside the main door. Evacuation procedures were posted by the back door.

A main Parent Information Board hangs to the right of the entry way into the building. It contained the calendar for the program, their daily routine the lesson plan, a mandatory reporter posting, certificate of license and licensing consultant information. Emergency evacuation procedures were also posted by the main entrance door. A No Smoking sign was taped to the glass on the front door of both buildings. The same postings were found across the hall in the Head Start building. I observed class schedules.

Reviewed written policies are provided to parents in the form of a parent handbook. The Parent Handbook is 32 pages long and contained Health Policies, Parent Policies (which contained an unlimited access policy, Education Services, Health Services, Classroom Policies, Safety Policies among other). An Illness and Exclusion Policy is included in the handbook. Evacuation of immobile children policies are present.

The Licensing book contains a Universal Precautions procedure and policy, the behavior/child guidance policy, and classroom rosters. Staff files are kept in the main office. Alicia Lovewell is the new Data Specialist who assisted me with staff credentials on 3/27/26. Five staff are employed at the center. Staff were up to date on physicals, Iowa Criminal Background checks, Fingerprints and all training including Mandatory Reporter, Universal Precautions, CPR/First Aid and professional development. No staff employed at the center are under 18 years of age. Staff are compliant with CPR/1st Aid training (every 2 years). Mandatory Reporter Training (every 5 years), updated staff physicals (every 3 years), updated SING checks (every 2 years) and updated fingerprints (every 4 years). It is duly noted that this program has had an excellent history of record keeping/staff requirement compliance the past 10 years. HHS is no longer required to track Universal Precautions training after the first year of employment.

Child files including updated physicals, immunizations, medical and dental information, pick up authorizations and field trip authorizations are reviewed annually. Two infants did not have physicals in their files.

Allergy Alert Plans will be hung in the rooms where the children are provided care for staff to reference in an emergency. A Daily Health Check is conducted on each child as they enter the bus or classroom. If the child appears to be ill they will be sent home. All children had necessary documentation in files such as emergency contacts, physical exams, and immunizations.

I observed signatures and dates indicating staff completed Emergency Training procedures annually. It is kept in the HHS Licensing Book.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

Staff are very interactive with the children.

Rooms are colorful and creative.

The center sends a monthly newsletter to parents.

The center is accredited by National Association for the Education of Young Children.

The center provides vision screening services for the children in cooperation with the local Lions Club.

The center provides hearing screening services for the children in cooperation with the local AEA.

The center provides dental screening and fluoride varnish services for the children in cooperation with Lee County Department of Public Health.

The center provides Brigance screening services to the children to monitor height, weight, and social/emotional development.

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I observed staff interacting with parents at pick up time. Staff and parents appear to have open and frequent communication.

The center is following best practice regarding sanitizing and disinfecting.

INTERACTIONS:
• What does the director do to ensure positive social interactions occur between children and staff?
To help insure positive interactions, we set up and conducted PBIS training in conjunction with Great Prairie AEA. This training was a 4-part series which was delivered on August 27, October 15, November 25, and November 26.
• Did you see evidence of positive interactions? (role playing, sing, read together, and more).
I make regular visits to the classrooms at all the sites. I see positive interactions on a regular basis in every classroom. Singing, reading together, conversations over mealtime, and IMIL (I am Moving, I am Learning) activities are regular occurrences throughout the program.
• Are there other observations about interactions worthy of reporting?
The teachers use tools such as "Go Noodle" to promote physical activity and positive interactions among the entire class. These activities, along with "Ready Rosie" which encourages and promotes social skills through the modeling of positive adult/child interactions helps our children and families learn to interact and develop school readiness skills.

WORKFORCE STABILITY:
• What does the director do to recruit amazing staff?
We look for the best, most qualified staff through internet posting for job openings, recruitment and placement offices at local colleges, postings on Head Start job boards through Region 7, and efforts to develop talent from within our organization.
• What does the director do to maintain amazing staff?
In an effort to retain staff, we offer a great deal of professional development on a number of topics in the early childhood field. We collaborate with agencies like the AEA to provide training opportunities that are engaging and informative. As an Agency, we have Agency wide training days where we focus on topics germane to the scope of the mission of Community Action. We have a wellness committee to encourage healthy choices and educate the staff on wellness topics including healthy eating, mental health, and financial wellness. We also recognize the outstanding work of our staff through email updates, newsletters, and through recognition assemblies.

WORKFORCE SKILL DEVELOPMENT
• What does the director do to help staff realize the opportunities for greatness as a child care provider? How does the "it factor" get established – more than providing supervision.
Through efforts to make global improvements, we have identified 3 major focus areas that all staff can identify. Improvement of Instruction…Improvement of Performance…Improvement of Attendance. These three focus areas are our guiding principles as we look to the next several years. We have adopted Creative Curriculum in its entirety to ensure consistency and maintain the quality programming we provide. This Head Start's goal of becoming a nationally recognized program has been communicated to the staff as an overarching objective and the pinnacle of success of our program. In the last year, I have begun to focus the coordinators on Leadership more than Management. These efforts continue to bring positive changes to the program and work with our teachers to build trust and excellence throughout.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

1. 109.8(2): Ratio maintained in center as required: The program only has a floater from 11:15 to 12:30 pm, but not every day. To maintain ratio throughout the day the program should have a floater to give staff breaks at least half the business day.

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

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

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The local CCNC for IDPH can conduct an Injury Prevention Checklist on the outdoor play area if necessary.

Information about the program can be accessed at http://www.caofseia.org/index.php.

The program has a family development specialist visits the site on Tuesdays.

The program may be relocating to a newer building in the next couple years..

Based upon this review, it is recommended that this center remain in Full licensing status. The center is directed to maintain licensing regulations throughout the year. No deficiencies are listed in Section IV as no pattern of disregard was found to be out of compliance the date of the visit. It is important to note, all HHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period.

HHS encourages you to contact your local nurse consultant Amy Hayes. Iowa Department of Public Health Child Care Nurse Consultants works with child care and early education businesses. Businesses may call or send questions to a child care nurse consultant about health and safety policies, health programs, health of personnel, and specific child health or safety issues. I reached out to CCNC Hayes in March asking what services if any she provided the program the past year. As of 4/9/26, no response.

HHS encourages you to contact Child Care Resource and Referral Consultant Jodi Norton. They offer centers assistance with meeting the HHS regulations, IQ4K, infant/toddler concerns, room arrangement and environment, developmental concerns, Best Practice information, CDA assistance, or any questions or concerns you may have. CCR&R Supervisor Jodi Norton reported she provided the following the past year: " Visit on 2/25/26. They had very few children/staff as many children were ill. They achieved IQ4K Level 3 this year and most of the work revolved around that."

TARGETED ASSESSMENT:

The Director and I discussed behavioral management strategies. He stated the following, :"Staff are supported in behavior management through PBIS aligned training introduced at orientation and reinforced through ongoing coaching and support meetings. Our mental health practitioner provides additional monthly consultation to all classrooms. All these strategies are grounded in a focus on staff wellness and de-escalation. Expectations are continuously monitored through coaching observations and feedback, with leadership intentionally embedding these practices into teaching, supervision, and evaluations to ensure consistency and accountability.

Matt"

Date: 04/10/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Jill Seibert

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**.