Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Happy Face's Daycare Center

Provider No.: 52187

Address: 1709 Pierce ST, Sioux City, IA, 51105

County: Woodbury

Director's Name: Patricia Aquino

On-Site Supervisor: Luceli Leon

Phone Number: 7124547705

E-Mail: happyfacesdaycare23@gmail.com

HHS Visit Date: 08/17/2026

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

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 03/31/2026

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

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

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

- [ ] Accrediation

Program Duration:

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

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HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday	6:00 AM to 5:30 PM		
Tuesday	6:00 AM to 5:30 PM		
Wednesday	6:00 AM to 5:30 PM		
Thursday	6:00 AM to 5:30 PM		
Friday	6:00 AM to 5:30 PM		
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	8	5	15	12	40
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

On 08/17/26, I conducted an unannounced visit at Happy Faces Daycare. I met with Director Patricia Aquino and Onsite Supervisor Luceli Leon. Both individuals have extensive experience in the childcare field and demonstrated a strong understanding of licensing requirements and daily operations. Luceli's background in early childhood education and the school system contributes to a knowledgeable and well-rounded leadership team.

The center provides bilingual childcare services for children ages 6 weeks to 12 years and operates Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Communication and daily activities are offered in both English and Spanish to meet the needs of diverse families. During the visit, all areas of the program were observed, including classrooms, nutritional practices, health and safety procedures, and administrative documentation. The program has 41 children enrolled, with 31 present during the visit. The center operates four classrooms: an infant room (6 weeks to 2 years), a transition room for primarily 2-year-olds, a preschool room, and a school-age room.

The center is well-organized, clean, and thoughtfully arranged, with clear separation of rooms to support age-appropriate activities. The environment is bright and cheerful, featuring numerous visual aids such as pictures paired with corresponding words, children's art projects, and alphabet displays that create a visually engaging learning environment. Each classroom includes defined activity centers such as a library, art area, blocks, puzzles, puppets, and a dramatic play area. Age-appropriate toys and materials were available and in good repair. Staff interactions were nurturing, hands-on, and positively engaged. Daily schedules and educational visuals—including numbers, colors, the alphabet, children's artwork, and helper charts—were prominently displayed. Each classroom had a clearly labeled, fully stocked first aid kit stored out of children's reach.

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No medication was in use at the time of the visit; however, proper medication storage procedures were in place. Daily sheets were completed for children under age two. Monthly fire and tornado drills were conducted. Radon testing had been completed, with results within the normal range. The annual furnace inspection was up to date, and monthly playground inspections were consistently completed. The center is working with CNC Specialist Lindsey Gilbert to redesign its playground, demonstrating a strong commitment to quality and ongoing improvement.

The center participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Meals—including breakfast, lunch, and snacks—are prepared onsite. Monthly menus were posted and accessible, and nutritional practices observed during the visit were consistent with CACFP guidelines. The kitchen remained well-organized and clean throughout all areas inspected.

Additionally, the center is collaborating with Child Care Partnership Specialist Jamie through Iowa Early Head Start. Through this partnership, the program will be implementing the Frog Street (Froggy) curriculum. Frog Street is a research-based, fully aligned early learning curriculum that supports development across all domains. It strengthens social-emotional learning through Conscious Discipline, provides structured daily routines and lesson plans, and incorporates engaging literacy, math, science, and creative activities. The curriculum reduces teacher prep time, includes bilingual family resources, and supports consistency with state standards and licensing requirements.

The center demonstrates strong routine and structure, reflected in the children's engagement during activities and their smooth transitions between each part of the day. Staff consistently interact with children at their level, providing appropriate modeling and support.

The center has identified two primary goals moving forward: completing the redesign of their outdoor play area and achieving Level 1 in the IQ4K quality rating system. Staff and leadership are actively working toward both objectives, demonstrating a commitment to ongoing improvement and enhanced quality of care.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

The center is actively collaborating with Iowa Early Head Start through Child Care Partnership Specialist Jamie. This partnership provides added support, coaching, and access to evidence-based resources. Through this collaboration, the center is adopting the Frog Street curriculum, which will strengthen classroom structure, enhance developmental learning, and support continuous quality improvement. This relationship reflects the center's commitment to meeting higher standards and improving outcomes for children.

IQ4K Level?1 is the entry level of Iowa's quality rating system. It confirms the center meets key standards in staff training, family engagement, safety practices, and program assessment. Reaching Level?1 helps the center strengthen its foundational quality, supports ongoing improvement, and increases credibility with families and the community.

The center's bilingual environment provides meaningful benefits for children and families. Children are exposed to both English and Spanish throughout daily activities, which supports early language development, strengthens communication skills, and enhances cognitive flexibility. Bilingual learning also creates a welcoming atmosphere for families who speak Spanish at home, helping build strong relationships and ensuring all families feel included and supported.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

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.

109.12(4)e: The provider shall follow safe sleep practices for infants under one year of age: Infants shall always be placed on their backs for sleep. Infants shall be placed on a firm mattress with a tight fitted sheet. Infants shall not be allowed to sleep on a bed, sofa, air mattress or other soft surface. No child shall be allowed to sleep in any item not designed for infant sleeping, including but not limited to an infant seat, car seat, swing, or bouncy seat. No toys, soft objects, stuffed animals, pillows, bumper pads, blankets, or loose bedding shall be allowed in the sleeping area with the infant. No co-sleeping shall be allowed. Sleeping infants shall be actively observed by sight and sound. If an alternate sleeping position is needed, a

signed physician or physician assistant authorization with statement of medical reason is required and an expiration date. 441—109.10 (Health and Safety Policies), incorporates these safe sleep standards by requiring all childcare providers to adopt safe sleep policies consistent with AAP and CPSC guidance—which includes avoiding swaddling in group care environments

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

Luceli reported that she frequently moves between classrooms to assist staff as needed and to ensure appropriate care is provided. Staff feel comfortable asking for help, and due to the small size of the center, both Luceli and Director Patricia are readily available. Luceli consistently models appropriate guidance, and she and her staff work together on effective redirection strategies. These include singing with a child, offering an alternative activity, or providing a brief break when appropriate. The center also holds bi-monthly meetings to address concerns and support ongoing communication among staff.
The swaddle was corrected immediately. Please let me know by email when other recommendations are completed.

A full license is recommended at this time.

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

Date: 08/17/2026

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**.