Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Tri-County Head Start-Lily Furgerson

Provider No.: 22888

Address: 507 Argyle St, Waterloo, IA, 50703

County: Black Hawk

Director's Name: Dr. Robert Welch

On-Site Supervisor: Bobbi Jo Seeman

Phone Number: 3192350383

E-Mail: rwelch@teamtricounty.org

HHS Visit Date: 08/26/2026

Licensing Period: 06/01/2025 to 06/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 11/19/2024

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 6:00 PM		
Tuesday	6:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Wednesday	6:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Thursday	6:00 AM to 6:00 PM		
Friday	6:00 AM to 6:00 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	22	14	16		52
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

On 08/26/26 I made an unannounced off year licensing visit to Tri-County Head Start-Lily Furgerson in Waterloo. I met with Tera Gunnarson, the program manager. She started with Head Start in August 2026. She has a Bs in elementary education. She was previously a director of a preschool program in Hudson. I also met with Bobbi Jo Seeman, the on-site supervisor. Ms. Seeman has been employed with Head Start since November 2020. She has an AAS in child development. There are nine staff members employed at the program and two additional staff members currently in training.

Ruby Crawford is the family worker. She meets with families in the home to provide support and assist with community resources. Dr. Robert Welch is the director of the early childhood programs operated by Tri-County Head Start. He started in December 2020. His office is in the administration office in Waterloo. Angela Barth is the Education Services Director. She started with Head Start in January 2017.

The program is in a free-standing building. The Head Start program can operate Monday through Friday from 6:00 am until 6:00 pm. Currently, the center is housing the early Head Start program and serves children birth until three-years-old. There are currently 20 children enrolled.

The center operates out of four rooms. They also have a Great room in the middle of the facility. The rooms include an infant room (Dreaming Dragonfly), a room for children approximately 15-18 months-old (Brave Butterflies), a room for children 18 months through two-years-olds (Caring Caterpillars), and a room for 24-36 months-old (Friendly Firefly). An inspection of each room was completed. Windows provide natural lighting. The rooms are decorated with posters regarding Active Supervision and culturally diverse posters.

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The centers observed on the day of the licensing visit include library, Lego/blocks, table toys, games, puzzles, transportation, computers, art, dramatic play, writing, math, science/discovery, sensory table and music. Centers were arranged in a manner that allowed easy movement between activities, but it also allowed for clear supervision by staff members. Materials were in good condition. The materials are located at child level, so they are easily accessible to the children.

There is a bathroom with three toilets and three sinks in the Great room area. Handwashing procedures were posted. There is also a staff bathroom with one toilet and one sink in this area. There is a bathroom in the administrative hallway that has one toilet and one sink and procedures were posted.

The Great room is in the middle of the facility. This area is used to combine the children during the first and last hour of the day and used for gross motor activity when the children cannot go outside. There are several center activities available for the children.

The center uses the Creative Curriculum to prepare lesson plans and completes GOLD assessments. They also complete 45-day assessments, which include ASQ, ASQ-SE and Brigance assessments. They use Second Step for social/emotional skills. Each teacher prepares their own lesson plans. The length of the study depends on the interest level of the children and number of activities associated with the study. In the infant room they set developmental goals for each child and plan activities to achieve these goals. Lesson plans were available for review in each room.

Daily sheets are maintained on children under the age of two.

The center partners with Central Rivers AEA to provide the children with hearing and vision screenings. Central Rivers AEA and they come to classrooms to work with children who have identified needs. Monthly newsletters are provided to the parents and the program participates in the Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports (PBIS) program in the classroom. This focuses on the three components, “be safe, be responsible and be respectful”. There are several visual cues in the classrooms to help direct the children. I did observe positive redirection and PBIS Methods being used with the children.

There was a phone with emergency numbers and the program’s address and phone number in the classrooms. Staff members communicate with each another using two-way radios. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and evacuation diagrams were posted by some of the main program doors and outdoor exits. Please post the evacuation diagrams near the exit to the attached classroom in the Caring Caterpillar room and near the outdoor exit in the Friendly Firefly room. A daily schedule was posted for each room.

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. I reviewed documentation of monthly playground inspections. A radon test was completed in July 2023 and is good for five years. Results were within EPA guidelines. The fuel burning inspection is not necessary because the building is all electric. A carbon monoxide detector is not necessary because the building is electric but there is one located in the Great Room. Outlets were protected. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 11/19/24.

Head Start participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The center provides breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. Lunch is delivered to the center from the Head Start Learning and Community Center in Waterloo. Breakfast and snack are prepared by staff members. The Head Start dietician makes the menu the for the program. The older children use family style or staff assisted family style. Disposable products are mostly used. Other items are put through an industrial dishwasher located in the kitchen. There is a refrigerator in the kitchen and thermometers were present. Menus were posted and allergies were confidentially posted.

Some of the rooms have a kitchenette area with a sink. This is beneficial in helping to prepare meals and snacks. There is a refrigerator in each of the rooms and thermometers were present.

Head Start provides two kinds of formula, baby food and cereal for the infants. If the infant requires a special formula, Head Start will purchase the formula with a doctor’s note. Bottles are placed through the industrial dishwasher in the kitchen to be washed and sanitized.

Head Start provides diapers and wipes for the children.

The center uses bleach and water to sanitize the food tables and disinfect the diaper changing tables. I discussed or

observed diaper changes with staff members and proper procedures are followed.

The center uses cribs and cots to nap.

The parent information is located on a bulletin board inside the entrance. The mandatory reporter, child care consultant and the handbook availability were posted. The license was conspicuously hung. A no-smoking sign was posted at the entrance.

The center has a fenced-in play area located on the north and south sides of the building. The south side offers several smaller play areas. The various areas use rubber tiles for surface cushioning and there is climbing equipment of various sizes. There are rocking toys for the children. There are picnic tables and benches for the children to rest. There is a large grassy area for the children to play. There is a bike path made from turf and the program turned a storage shed into a gas station.

On the north side there is a large grassy area. Rubber tiles are used for surface cushioning in one area where there is a piece of climbing equipment with slides and other activities. There is a bicycle-merry-go-round and rocking toys. There is a second area that uses rubber mulch as surface cushioning. In this area there is a stationary police car, a teeter totter and a balance beam. It appears the balance beam needs to be buried much deeper. The concrete slab holding the teeter totter is visible. This is hazardous to the children. The balance beam cannot be used until this is fixed.

There is a tarp on the north side and several trees on both sides that provide shade.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

There are several staff members that have longevity with the Head Start program. This provides consistency for families and having staff members familiar with policies allows the program to run smoothly. Staff members were all observed to be attentive and nurturing. They were enthusiastic yet provided a calm learning environment. Staff members modeled good manners and acknowledged children when they used good manners. Staff members are actively engaged in activities with the children. They used play to teach the children about colors and counting. One classroom did a Kindermusik lesson and they provided the children with egg shakers and bell shakers to make the experience more fun. Staff members used PBIS methods to redirect children. Staff members were observed to have good communication with one another and good teamwork. Staff members were patient. They assisted the children with handwashing. The classrooms took the children outside to the playground to enjoy the nice weather.

Ms. Gunnarson states they build strong relationships with families. They work hard to build trusting, respectful partnerships with parents and caregivers and recognize that families are the experts on their children. They strive to create an environment where families feel welcomed, heard, and supported.

There is great staff longevity.

The program is in a secure building and there are cameras in the rooms.

Head Start meets with families at least four times each year. They make two home visits and have two conferences at the program.

Each classroom prepares a monthly newsletter for families and Tri County Head Start does a monthly newsletter.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

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. It appears the balance beam on the north side needs to be buried much deeper. The concrete slab holding the teeter totter is

visible. This is hazardous to the children. The balance beam cannot be used until this is fixed.

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

N/A

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

A full license is issued for the remainder of the licensing period. All HHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period.

An administrative change is being made to name Bobbi Jo Seeman as the new on-site supervisor. Ms. Seeman has been employed with Head Start since November 2020. She has an AAS in child development.

Targeted Assessment: Behavior Management:
I was unable to meet with Ms. Gunnarson following my visit so I sent her an email regarding her oversight of behavior management related to helping childcare staff: 1) Understand expectations, 2) managing frustrations, 3) monitor performance. Ms. Gunnarson states as the program manager, she provides staff with ongoing coaching, support, and clear expectations regarding student behaviors. She reviews program policies and expectations with staff regarding positive behavior support, active supervision, and appropriate interactions. She makes sure staff understand what is expected of them and provides opportunities to ask questions and discuss difficult situations.

As a manager, she helps staff understand that recognizing their own frustration is an important part of responding appropriately to children's challenging behaviors. She encourages staff to pay attention to their own physical and emotional cues, such as becoming tense, feeling overwhelmed, speaking more loudly, or feeling like they are losing patience. They discuss these signs during supervision, team meetings, and coaching so staff can recognize them before they escalate. She reminds staff that it is okay to feel frustrated, but it is their responsibility to manage that frustration and remain calm and professional when interacting with children. Staff are encouraged to pause, take a breath, lower their voice, slow down, and give themselves a moment to think before responding.

She monitors these skills and expectations with regular classroom observations, active supervision, coaching, and team communication.

Date: 08/28/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Becky Frost

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**.