**Iowa Department of Human Services**
**CHILD CARE CENTER EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE**

**Name of Center:** Burlington Head Start Preschool & Early Head Start **Enrollment:** 100 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 21200

**Street:** 700 S Starr St **City:** Burlington Iowa **Zip** 52601 **County:** Des Moines

**Mailing Address:** 700 S Starr St, Burlington, IA, 52601

**Director's Name:** Matthew LeClere **Phone Number:** 319-753-5692

**On-Site Supervisor(s):** Jennifer Mehmert, Tuty Horne **E-Mail:** matthew.leclere@caofseia.org

**Date(s) of Visit:** 04-25-2025

**Licensing Visit** X **Unannounced Visit** X **Off Year Visit** **Administrative Change**

**LICENSING VISITS**

**New Application** X **Re-Application** **NA**

**Signed Application (470-0722) Received** X **Yes** **No** **NA** **Date Signed:** 03-04-2024

**FIRE INSPECTION** **State** X **Local** **NA** **Is Fire Inspection Approved?** X **Yes** **No** **NA**

**Date Inspected:** 08-26-2024

**Comments :** due annually, conducted by Burlington Fire Department

**LICENSE TYPE:** X **Child Care** **Preschool (ages 3-5 meets three hours or less per day)**

**Financial Type:** Profit X Non-Profit NA

**Accredition:** Accredited NAEYC NSACA Other X NA

**Program Serves:** Infants (0-23 mo.) 2 Years Preschool-Age X School-Age

Get-Well Evening Care Special Needs

**SCHEDULE:** Year-round X School-Year Summer Only

| **HOURS:** | *Year-round* | *School-Year* | *Summer Only* |
|---|---|---|---|

| LICENSE CAPACITY | Infants | 2 Years | Preschool | School-Age | Capacity |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| General | 20 | 12 | 128 | | 160 |
| Summer | | | | | 0 |

**QRS Rating:** 3

| RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE: | |
|---|---|
| X | **FULL** license from 11-01-2024 to 11-01-2026 |
| | **PROVISIONAL** license from |
| | **DENIAL** of initial application |
| | **SUSPENSION** of license |
| | **REVOCATION** of license |

**Licensing Consultant:** Jill Seibert **Date:** 05-16-2025

**I. IF CURRENT LICENSE IS PROVISIONAL, IDENTIFY THE CORRECTIVE ACTIONS**

N/A

**II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:**

Burlington Head Start Preschool and Early Head Start is located in Corse Elementary School in a residential neighborhood in Burlington. The director of the program is Matthew LeClere, Ed.S. Director Head Start/Early Head Start Community Action of Southeast Iowa. Mr. LeClere has a BA in Elementary Education, a BS in Education Administration, with an endorsement in Special Needs. He worked for many years (18+) in the capacity of teacher and principal at a public school district. Director LeClere supervises several Head Start/Early Head Start programs in south east Iowa counties Des Moines, Henry and Lee. He is based out of central office in Burlington. He has been Director since 2019. He was present the date of the visit.

BHSP & EHS relocated to the former Corse School building in a residential area of Burlington in 2020. The program currently shares the space with Burlington School District preschool classrooms and Corse Early Childhood. The program has been operational for many years and was formerly located at the former James Madison Elementary Building and Flint Hills prior to that.

Head Start is a federally funded, non-profit program dedicated to providing quality school readiness and family support services to those of low income.

HEAD START is a preschool and child development program for children 3-5 years of age. Part day classes operate Monday-Thursday for 3 ½ – 4 hours per day. Transportation may be available. Full day classes operate Monday-Friday and hours of care are based on parent work, school or job training schedules. Transportation is not provided for the full day classroom as longer hours of care may be available from 6:00 a.m to 6:00 p.m.

EARLY HEAD START is a child care and child development program for infants and toddlers (birth to 3 years of age). Early Head Start provides prenatal education to pregnant mothers and their partners as a slot is reserved for the baby until they are delivered and able to start attending. This program is for parents who are working, in school, or in job training.

There is NO COST for families who participate in programs, however, families must meet income requirements to participate.

Services are available to children with disabilities and special needs in partnership with local school programs and area education agencies.

Families of children in foster care and/or who are homeless are encouraged to apply.

Two visits were made to this facility in preparation for Permission to Open and licensing in 2020. On the first visit during the summer I met with Program Director LeClere. On the second visit I met with the Early Head Start on-site supervisor, Tuty Horne. I arrived at the center on 10/5/21 for an unannounced off year visit and all areas were observed at that time. On 4/25/25 and the past 5 years I met with both On Site Supervisors (Ms. Horne and Ms. Mehmert). Director LeClere was also present. Ms. Horne has many years experience as a lead teacher with Early Head Start for Burlington, Keokuk and Ft.

Madison programs. She has been employed with Early Head Start since 2004 and is present daily in EHS. Jennifer Mehmert will be sending her OSS request in IPOWER as she was recently appointed to this position. She has been employed in licensed childcare since 2017 and has worked for Head Start off and on since 2018.

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.

Program Nutrition Practices:

The center chooses to participate in the CACFP Program. Food preparation and storage procedures were consistent with NHSPS. The centers had thermometers in all refrigerators and freezers. The center offers all meals and snacks throughout the day. Each child was served a nutritionally balanced meal and snack as defined by CACFP guidelines. Food allergies were posted. All children with allergies (food or otherwise) should have an allergy action plan in the room with the child so staff know how to respond to an allergic reaction. Staff should be able to easily reference the plan in the event of an emergency.

Program Health and Safety:

Medications are inaccessible to public and the center is able to provide documentation of medication given. Allergy Action Plans signed by a physician should be on file for each child with allergies. These plans are also posted in the child's classroom. Staff caring for the children with special health care needs or allergies should be trained on the plans. The program has historically followed recommendations from the IDPH for appropriate hand washing. All first aid supplies recommended by the IDPH were available in the centers first aid kits. Tornado and Fire Drills were documented once a month as required. Heat and air are inconsistent throughout the building making temperature control difficult at times.

Environmental regulations such as radon testing, carbon monoxide detectors, fuel burning appliances inspections and lead based paint were reviewed. If the building was constructed prior to 1978 a Visual Lead Based Paint assessment should be conducted. The building was initially constructed in 1912 but renovated in 2002. Any part of the building not renovated should have the assessment conducted where children are present. Lighting is provided by windows, cribs are compliant with 2012 regulations and ventilation was adequate during the visit. Radon testing is due every five years and should be conducted in winter months when the ground is frozen.

HHS requires that staff be assigned specific children so that staff may know the names and number of children assigned to their care. Daycare staff regularly indicate separating the children into groups made supervision more easily accomplished. This method also assists staff in ensuring ratio is being met and followed throughout the program hours. This has not been practiced this school year. We discussed this during the visit. Even when groups are smaller staff should be signed specific children.

Ten employees at this site have over 10 years experience with HS/EHS.

Program Playground:

The center playground includes an open green/concrete space and several age appropriate toys. Head Start children are able to utilize age appropriate climbing equipment shared with Corse Preschool students when the area is not being utilized by the preschool children. Shade is provided by the building but more shade is needed in the courtyard area. EHS and HS also finished the courtyard this past year. Another outdoor play area was added with climbing equipment. It is fenced. The Child Care Weather Watch is utilized if outdoor play is questionable due to varying weather conditions.

Playground inspections were present showing they had been conducted monthly as required.

Program Field Trips and Transportation:

The center provides transportation to and from the program. Buses are inspected annually and contain first aid kits and emergency contacts for each child. Emergency medications should accompany children to and from field trips.

Program Administrative Records:

The following posting were available on the date of my visit: Mandatory Reporter, Handbook Availability, Consultant Contact, License, Emergency Procedures for fire and tornado, and no smoking signs.

Child and staff files are reviewed annually. All policies and procedures were reviewed.

Age appropriate curriculum was posted. Lesson plans were appropriate which included: active and quiet times, large-group activities, small group activities and time to play alone or with others, indoor and outdoor play times, and time for children

to select their own activities and teacher directed activities. A wide variety of toys, educational games, puzzles, and books were available to the children to utilize. They were all in good condition. The environment was clean and safe. Staff provided educational materials that were age appropriate.

Child files are reviewed annually. Child file information is obtained by the Family Development Specialists. Information reviewed are current physicals and immunizations, dental and medical information, emergency contacts, field trip authorizations and pick up authorizations. Family Development specialists are working with families to acquire updated child physicals. Information is kept in Child Plus.

Child incident reports are reviewed during the visit.

Staff files are reviewed annually. The program employs approximately 35 staff. Alicia Lovewell, Administrative Specialist housed in the main office in Burlington for Head Start/Early Head Start Program, Community Action of Southeast Iowa provides HHS with all staff data regarding trainings, physicals and criminal background checks on 5/5/25. She stated, "For CPR/First Aid we had Mary Davis (FDS) and Jenn Mehmert (Corse site supervisor) expire 4/28/2025 but they are scheduled for that training at 9am on 5/23/2025." This is not a pattern of disregard (less than 10% of staff). It should be noted that Burlington administration has had an excellent history of record keeping for all licensed Head Start/Early Head Start programs. This is recognized and duly noted.

The center has developed procedures for annual staff and volunteer training on emergency plans. Staff signed and dated the new Emergency Preparedness Plan for the building validating they have been trained on the plan. Staff signed and dated acknowledgement of training this August.

**III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:**

The program is meeting a need in the community.

Several employees at this site have many years of experience at Head Start/Early Head Start.

**IV. IDENTIFY THE ASPECTS OF OPERATION THAT FALL BELOW THE STANDARDS REVIEWED:**

1. 109.10(1)a: 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, PA, Chiropractor or ARNP, and contains health history; present health status including allergies, medications, and acute/chronic conditions; and recommendations for continued care if necessary. Number not in compliance: 20

2. 109.11(3)a: Center shall ensure that: Facility and premises are sanitary, safe, and hazard free. Adequate indoor and outdoor space is provided. The outdoor area shall include safe play equipment and area of shade. Sufficient space provided for dining. Sufficient lighting shall be provided. Sufficient ventilation. Sufficient heating. Sufficient cooling. Sufficient bathroom and diapering facilities. Equipment, including kitchen appliances, are maintained so as not to result in burns, shock, or injury to children. Sanitation and safety procedures for the center are developed and implemented to reduce risk or injury or harm to children and reduce transmission of disease. The perimeter of the outdoor play area fence is loose and could be an entrapment hazard.

3. 109.11(7)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. The boiler report expired in 2024. The OSS agreed to procure an updated report.

**V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Based upon this review, it is recommended that this center remain in Full licensing status. The center is directed to correct the items listed in Section IV. The director and OSS gave me a verbal commitment that the noted rule violations would be promptly corrected. It is important to note, all HHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period.

IHHS encourages you to contact your local nurse consultant. Child Care Nurse Consultants work 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. Nancy Granaman is your Child Care Nurse Consultant: http://idph.iowa.gov/hcci/consultants

IHHS encourages you to contact Child Care Resource and Referral. They offer centers assistance with meeting the HHS regulations, QRS, infant/toddler concerns, room arrangement and environment, developmental concerns, Best Practice information, CDA assistance, or any questions or concerns you may have. Tabitha Copeland is your Child Care Consultant: http://www.iowaccrr.org/who_we_are/region_5/

CCR&R Supervisor Jodi Norton stated on 5/5/25, "I have been in the offices going over files/license books but not in any classrooms this year. There has been some admin turnover so we have been focusing on getting the files things in place. ."

*Note: If you are the Child Care Center Director and you feel something is unclear or unjustly cited, please contact your DHS Licensing Consultant to discuss the issue. The child care director may also send a response which will be placed in the licensing file.

*Note: If you are a member of the general public, there may be additional information contained in the public file. You may contact the DHS Licensing Consultant to inquire.