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

Name of Center: HACAP Head Start-Marion **Enrollment:** 41 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 25053

Street: 5650 Kacena Ave **City:** Marion Iowa **Zip** 52302 **County:** Linn

Mailing Address: 5650 Kacena Ave, Marion, IA, 52302

Director's Name: Jaina Brandstetter **Phone Number:** 319-447-5816

On-Site Supervisor(s): Jaina Brandstetter **E-Mail:** jbrandstetter@hacap.org

Date(s) of Visit: 11-12-2024

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

LICENSING VISITS

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

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

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

Date Inspected: 03-17-2023

Comments :

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

Get-Well Evening Care Special Needs

SCHEDULE: X Year-round School-Year Summer Only

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General	8	8	32		48
Summer					0

QRS Rating: 3

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 12-01-2023 to 12-01-2025
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons **Date:** 11-26-2024

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

Not applicable.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

HACAP Head Start (HHS) - Marion has been in operation for many years with having relocated to their current property in March 2023. HHS - Marion operates year-round and includes both early head start and head start classrooms. The program serves older infants through preschool-age. Current enrollment is 41.

Multi-site HHS early childhood program executive director is Christi Regan. Ms. Regan has a BA degree in elementary education with early childhood reading, has been employed with head start for over 20 years, and continues to participate in much child development related training. HHS - Marion's site specific combined director/on-site supervisor is Jaina Brandstetter. Ms. Brandstetter has been the combined director/on-site supervisor of this site since July, 2014. Ms. Brandstetter has a degree in education, has several years of experience working with children, and continues to participate in much child development related training.

On 11/12/2024, program space was observed.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

HACAP is a community action agency currently providing head start services throughout 9 Iowa counties. HACAP began in 1968 serving families in Johnson, Jones, and Linn Counties. From 1973-1981, HACAP expanded to provide services in Benton, Iowa, and Washington Counties. Then, in fall of 2020, HACAP again expanded to provide services in Delaware, Dubuque, and Jackson Counties. Specifically, HHS- Marion continues to be located in a predominantly urban area and has been in operation for several years.

HACAP's mission and goal is "...helping people develop skills to become successful and build strong communities..." and "...to bring about a greater degree of social competence in the young children..."

HACAP has community support and operates under a Board of Directors. HACAP has the following website for families and the community to learn more about their programs including early learning programs: http://www.hacap.org.

HHS - Marion continues to participate in quality initiatives including local quality initiatives, CACFP, and IQ4K. The program has achieved IQ4K 3-Star.

In fall 2017, HACAP Head Start - Marion was featured in the National Head Start Magazine "Sandbox". An article entitled "The Story of Otis" shared the children's experiences related to the program's main area of study "Monarch Butterflies" throughout late summer/early fall. Ms. Brandstetter discussed the 2023 program relocation and how they are collaborating with Iowa State Master Gardeners to develop similar natural outdoor learning experiences at this new location.

Executive management of HHS has remained consistent. This program's management team (e.g. Ms. Regan, Ms. Brandstetter) has systems of organization in place to help ensure administrative items are completed as required and maintained in a confidential manner. Management is knowledgeable of licensing guidelines as well as their own program's

policies and procedures. Ms. Brandstetter is currently celebrating her 10th year as combined director/on-site supervisor. Congratulations!

HHS - Marion has retained many seasoned employees as well as hired a few new ones. Staff reported celebrating 23 years, 20 years, 17 years, 6 years and 1 year with HHS. The program's chef Penny reported celebrating 10 years of providing culinary delights to the children. Staff longevity at this site is impressive! All staff have at least a CDA and/or are working towards a CDA. Many staff have advanced degrees in education and early childhood development. Documentation indicates that employees often complete annual professional growth training that exceeds Iowa Code requirements.

HHS has a Parent Committee, Policy Council, and bilingual family support workers. There are parent boards with required postings, community resources, and program reminders. There are additional posting areas for community resources in the area of nutrition, upcoming area events, skill building, and community involvement opportunities. Family involvement is highly encouraged including participation in the HHS Parent Committee, home-conference visits and family events. Ms. Brandstetter talked about the program's first open house event occurring in August 2024. Ms. Brandstetter acknowledged that their first open house was so well received that it will most likely become an annual event.

HHS - Marion is located in a building which was completely refurbished for the program to relocate to in March 2023. The building is secure, inviting, and aesthetically pleasing both inside and outside. HHS - Marion has a spacious on-site kitchen to help prepare healthy meals and store foods. Staff have access to a resource-work area, staff breakroom, and supply storage area. HHS has a maintenance team which will continue to help ensure the building and property remains sanitary and hazard free each day. A monthly facility checklist is completed.

Classrooms are arranged in a thoughtful manner with learning at the forefront. Furnishings and materials are child friendly and in good repair. Children's accomplishments (e.g. artwork) were observed to be displayed in several areas of the building. Creative Curriculum is the primary curriculum with goals to move online for enhancing teaching strategies and project approach. Curriculum also incorporates guest speaker events (e.g. community guest readers, Master Gardeners). HHS participates in an annual all site shutdown timeframe in order to prepare for each new academic year (e.g. project building maintenance, classroom cleaning/preparation, professional development).

HHS - Marion collaborates well with many community partners including local area access, local school districts, local businesses, CCR&R and health professionals. There is also a partnership among all HHS sites that allows for the sharing of staff training, ideas and resources.

HHS - Marion has emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. The program successfully navigated through the 2008 historic Linn County flood, 2019 winter Polar Vortex, 2019 health (covid-19) pandemic, 8/10/20 Derecho Storm, 2021 food supply issues, 2022 infant formula shortages, 2023 air quality alerts and 7/19/24 global technology outage.

Each child is engaged in a daily health check upon arrival for early detection of apparent illness, communicable disease, or unusual condition or behavior which may adversely affect the child or the group. HHS has policies and procedures in place for hand washing, diapering, cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting. Cleaning checklists and daily sanitation reminders were observed in various areas of the center. It was noted that the EHS 1 classroom storage area was incredibly organized!

On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were nurturing and attentive to the children's needs. Areas of study included bread and transportation. Children had access to an array of materials (e.g. books, imaginative play options, sensory items, building materials, water colors/crafts) that encouraged innovative play. Activities observed were many (e.g. center play experiences, outdoor large gross motor play). Staff provided a companionable presence allowing children to have many choices in their play experiences. Staff were observed communicating with children verbally, using picture cues, and through sign language. Routine transitions (e.g. restroom breaks, indoor-to-outdoor weather attire) worked smoothly into the program's welcoming and cooperative play environment. Staff were overheard engaging with children in meaningful discussion, encouraging social graces, and using positive redirection when needed. Children responded well to staff and appeared to be truly enjoying their day.

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

None noted.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Please review rule 109.11(3)a(2) which states "...The outdoor area shall include safe play equipment and an area of shade..." Both outdoor play areas lack shade. Management reported there is a plan for shade to be installed on both playgrounds in the very near future. Continue to increase developmentally and physically appropriate outdoor play materials on both

playgrounds. Licensing also strongly supports adding a storage shed to both playgrounds for ease of storing loose materials.

The program's license remains in full status. Thank you for the visit.

*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.