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

Name of Center: Fort Dodge Head Start **Enrollment:** 65 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 18043

Street: 3611 Maple Dr **City:** Fort Dodge Iowa **Zip** 50501 **County:** Webster

Mailing Address: 214 S 13th St, Fort Dodge, IA, 50501

Director's Name: Michelle Carden **Phone Number:** 515-573-2882

On-Site Supervisor(s): Terri Adkins **E-Mail:** mcarden@yourhs-ehs.org

Date(s) of Visit: 01-17-2025

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

LICENSING VISITS

New Application X **Re-Application** **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: 03-18-2024

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 X NAEYC NSACA Other NA

Program Serves: Infants (0-23 mo.) 2 Years X Preschool-Age 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			128		128
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 02-01-2025 to 02-01-2027
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Raymond Salsbury **Date:** 02-05-2025

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

NA

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

An unannounced annual visit was made to the Fort Dodge Head Start Program on 01-17-25 where I met with on-site supervisor Terri Adkins. The program is located in a free standing building on the East end of Fort Dodge and is overseen by Y.O.U.R Inc. and it's board of directors. The program is the only entity making use of the facilities. Michelle Carden is the executive director for the program and has been in that position since 2016, and Terri Adkins became the on-site supervisor in 2020. Both are well qualified for the positions they hold with extensive experience, education, and on-going training in early childhood education. The center offers preschool programming only and serves children 3 and 4 years of age. There are currently 6 classrooms each with a teacher and aid though only 5 classrooms are being utilized at this time due to decreased enrollment. There are currently 65 children enrolled in the program. All aspects of the program subject to licensing standards were reviewed.

The general layout, design, and programming remains the same as observed in prior reports. All classrooms have restroom facilities available directly from the programming space so that children do not need to leave the room. Two of the classrooms have a door providing direct access to the outdoors, two have a connecting door, and the others make use of designated emergency egress windows. All exits were clear of obstruction and opened easily and freely. Each classroom is a large open space that makes use of shelves, furniture, and play structures to define activity centers that were arranged so as not to create any blind areas. The available activity centers are consistent among the classrooms and include options such as group learning, dramatic play, math/science, large/small manipulatives, puzzles, art/craft, light and experience tables, reading, and calming areas. The materials in each activity center were observed to be in good repair and appropriate to the ages of the children. Each classroom posts a copy of the daily schedule and planned curriculum.

The center follows a pre-established yearly lesson plan that moves children through the year starting with introductions and getting to know the program, and then moving through various learning focus themes and specific number/letter concepts. General learning themes on the day of my visit included Pets, Buildings, and Tubes/Tunnels. The toys and materials in the classrooms are changed throughout the year to reflect and support the planned curriculum. The center does make use of repurposed materials that while not originally intended as child play items have been cleaned, modified, or constructed for use as programming support. This includes food containers in dramatic play centers, created cardboard structures, and various common tubes and pipes. This use of repurposed items helps children to recognize elements in their daily lives and how they relate to what they are learning, and also helps the children to develop divergent thinking skills.

Good interactions were observed in each classroom with the teachers being actively engaged with the children and implementing the planned curriculum. All classrooms were observed to follow their planned schedules moving from activities such as small group learning to individualized self directed play, large group teacher lead activities, lunch, and outdoor play. The teachers were observed to position themselves in different areas of the classroom, near children requiring more assistance, and otherwise following practices that improved supervision and engagement. The teachers did interact with the children asking them questions and reviewing learning concepts to help reinforce the learning the learning concepts being presented to the children. The center uses a positive behavior support system focused on helping to encourage appropriate behavior in a proactive manner and the teachers did an excellent job of implementing this approach. Several situations were observed during the visit in which children were refusing to comply with classroom expectations, having

conflict with peers, or being generally upset. In situations where children were refusing to comply with expectations the teachers did not require the child to participate but ignored behavior non-destructive and non-aggressive behavior and instead continued to encourage the child to join the group and review expectations until the child eventually complied. In other situations the teachers would provide redirection, or engage in guided problem solving to help the children identify alternative acceptable behaviors. All teachers were observed to use positive, encouraging tones of voice when speaking with the children. One issue that was observed during the visit was a teacher that had picked a child up and was carrying the child over her shoulder. While it was obvious that this was not being done as a response/consequence of negative behavior based on the interactions with the teacher and child talking and laughing it was a situation that was discussed with Terri. It was reviewed that while licensing standards do not require policies regarding staff lifting, carrying, or physically redirecting children the center may want to consider developing a center based policy as a means to help reduce the risk of injury to children and staff.

Good health and safety policies and practices are in place. Allergy and health care response plans were present for those children who had identified concerns with information maintained in the classrooms. Each classroom maintains a first aid kit and supplies in the classroom and the center also maintains additional supplies to replenish kits as needed. Good medication storage and administration documentation was observed. Chemical cleaners, personal items, and other materials that could pose a risk to children were stored in areas that were not readily accessible to the children. Good cleaning practices were observed with the staff waiting for the children to be out of the immediate area before using chemical cleaners. During the visit it was noted that the center also engages in other hygiene practices with having the children brush their teeth. Hand washing practices do need to be reviewed. Good handwashing was observed overall with children washing their hands after restroom use, and being directed to wash their hands after blowing their noses, but these practices were not always ensured. In one classroom a child was observed to have washed their hands in an ineffective manner with not working the soap into a lather, and another had washed their hands but then started crawling around on the bathroom floor then coming out to eat lunch. The teacher did send the child back to re-wash their hands after being informed of the need but these situations do highlight the need for staff to supervise and assist the children when washing their hands. It was also observed that one teacher did not wash her hands immediately before engaging in meal service as required.

The center does have a kitchen where breakfast is prepared but lunch and snacks are prepared off-site at the program's central office and brought to the center in temperature holding containers. The center does have refrigerators and a convection oven to ensure that proper temperatures are maintained prior to meal service. Good food storage practices were observed for those food items that are maintained on-site. Good food handling procedures were observed on the day of my visit. The center serves meals family style providing measured scoops to ensure that children receive a full serving. The kitchen was observed to be clean with no evidence of insect or rodent infestation. The center does participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program and a menu is posted that identified a good variety of credible foods. The meal served was consistent with the planned menu and consisted of pizza, oranges in jello, salad, and milk.

The outdoor playground spaces remain the same as observed in the prior visit. The program has several playground areas located on site, and a large open commons area that can be used for large motor skill activities when weather conditions do not allow for outdoor play. The indoor play area has balls, tumbling mats, and other play equipment for the children to use which was observed to be in good repair. The center has completed construction of one new playground space which has a large climbing structure, and music center which were observed to be good repair. Synthetic turf over rubber is used for fall surfacing. The two prior playground spaces are also still present and while still receive some use this is now primarily limited to the end of the day where staff and children can watch for arriving parents. The center is also considering options to remove at least one of these spaces to increase the available parking. Newly renovated playground space. Rubber mulch is used for fall surfacing and a good depth of material was present. The other older smaller playground does not have any climbing structures but has a green space with several trees that provide shade and a paved riding track. All playgrounds are fully enclosed by fencing which was observed to be in good repair.

All required notices were posted at the main parent entry and were readily accessible to parents and visitors. In addition all notices, schedules, and curriculum plans were also posted by each classroom entry. Child file information is maintained via an electronic management system and the center has obtained the required information for each child. In addition an Emergency Contacts sheet which information for each child has been printed which is maintained in each classroom. Staff files are reviewed annually at the Head Start Central Office for all licensed programs overseen by the organization and any issues identified are addressed at that time. All inspection logs and certificates were found to be current and valid. The center does maintain several small buses to provide transportation and each appeared to be in good repair and service records are maintained.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

Terri identified that the center is fully staffed. Several of the teachers have been with the center for a number of years which has provided for a strong level of continuity of programming as the teachers are familiar with the curriculum, teaching styles of their co-workers, and have continued to obtain additional training. Terri identified that some of her staff are participating

in the TEACH program which provides supplemental financial pay for those teachers that are taking additional training.

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

109.10(7): Staff hand washing: The center shall ensure staff demonstrate clean personal hygiene. Staff shall wash hands: Upon arrival at the center.Immediately before eating or participating in food service activity.After diapering a child.Before leaving the rest room either with a child or by themselves.Before and after administering nonemergency first aid if gloves are not worn.After handling animals or cleaning cages.
-- One teacher was observed to not wash their hands immediately prior to engaging in meal service as required.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

A full license is recommended at this time. Please provide a written response to the licensing consultant identifying a plan of action to correct and maintain those aspects cited as not meeting licensing standards and an anticipated date of compliance. At least one visit will be made to the center during the next year.

*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.