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

Name of Center: Keokuk Head Start **Enrollment:** 70 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 21176

Street: 220 S 22nd St **City:** Keokuk Iowa **Zip** 52632 **County:** Lee

Mailing Address: 2850 Mt Pleasant St Ste 108, Burlington, IA, 52601

Director's Name: Matt LeClere **Phone Number:** 319-524-6383

On-Site Supervisor(s): Mallory Lopez **E-Mail:** matthew.leclere@caofseia.org

Date(s) of Visit: 05-13-2025

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

LICENSING VISITS

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

Signed Application (470-0722) Received X **Yes** **No** **NA** **Date Signed:** 04-15-2025

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

Date Inspected: 02-05-2025

Comments : conducted by Keokuk Fire Department Patrick McNally, due annually,

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

Get-Well Evening Care X Special Needs

SCHEDULE: X Year-round School-Year Summer Only

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General	10	10	84		104
Summer					0

QRS Rating: 3

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 05-01-2025 to 05-01-2027
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Jill Seibert **Date:** 07-16-2025

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

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

Keokuk Head Start is located in a single story masonry building that was specifically constructed for child care. The center is owned and operated by Community Action of Southeast Iowa and is co-located with that agency's Keokuk neighborhood center program. The neighborhood center clients do not have direct access to child care areas. The Head Start/ Early Head Start program serves infants, toddlers and preschool age children. The Head Start Director for the area is Matt LeClere. Director 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. Mr. LeClere is director of several Head Starts in the area for Community Action in Henry, Des Moines, and Lee counties. He has served in this role since 2019. Director LeClere and HHS have frequent phone contact throughout the year.

Mallory Lopez is the appointed-On Site Supervisor at this program. She started this position in 2023. She has worked for Head Start since 2016. Head Start Community Action of Southeast Iowa-Marie Tallarico Center 319-524-6383 Ext. 112 Fax: 319-524-3017. OSS Lopez has an office on-site and is present daily. I met with Renee Lynch the day of the visit. She was helpful and knowledgeable during the visit.

Renee Lynch(Family Development Specialist) is also housed in this building and often present. Ms. Lynch has been employed in Head Start centers since 2019. An OSS must present at least 6 hours a day. Another qualified staff should be appointed as OSS and be present if Mallory is not present.

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.

I made an unannounced licensing visit to the program on 5/13/25. At the time of the visit all program areas were observed. 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.

Center Nutrition Practices:

The center chooses to participate in the CACFP Program. Food preparation and storage procedures were consistent with NHSPS. No food was stored on the floor. 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. The center cook has had this position for 5 years. Food allergies were posted.

Center Health and Safety:

Medications are inaccessible to public, and the center is able to provide documentation of medication given. 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.

Environmental regulations such as radon testing, carbon monoxide detectors, fuel burning appliances inspections and lead based paint were reviewed. Radon testing is up to date and results indicated safe levels under 4 pci/L. Updated testing is due every five years and should be completed during winter months when the ground is frozen. Fuel burning appliances inspections are due annually. Carbon monoxide detectors are plug in and placed throughout the building. Units should be checked for expiration dates. Lighting is provided by windows; cribs are compliant with 2012 regulations and ventilation was adequate during the visit. All cabinetry is now anchored that could pose as toppling hazards. Infants should not be allowed to sleep in infant seats, even for a minute. When a child is drifting off to sleep the infant should be placed in the crib. All children were awake at the time of the visit.

Ten employees of the center have 6 or more years' experience with HS/EHS.

All children with allergies, asthma or other special health needs have an allergy action, asthma action or another health care plan posted on the classroom refrigerator for staff to easily refer to in the event of a medical emergency.

Center Playground:

The center playgrounds include an open green space as well as a hard surfacing space and several age-appropriate toys. Play areas are fenced and on the side and behind the Head Start building. Head Start children are able to utilize age-appropriate commercial climbing equipment in a fenced in area. Shade is provided by a large tarp. Surfacing under climbing equipment is adequate. Gaps on the fence in the outdoor play area between 3.5- 9 inches should be addressed so they are not potential entrapment hazards. EHS and HS have separate play areas. The Child Care Outdoor Weather Watch is utilized when outdoor play is questionable due to varying weather conditions. First aid kits are taken outside with the children as well as emergency contact and emergency medications. The program has a maintenance person Michelle Stafford who monitors and fixes issues indoors and outdoors.

Center Field Trips and Transportation:

Field trip authorizations are signed by parents when the child is enrolled. First aid kits will be taken on field trips, walking or otherwise. HS/EHS does not provide transportation to and from the program.

Center Administrative Records:

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.

The following postings were available on the date of the 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. Child files are updated throughout the year by the FDS. All policies and procedures were reviewed. 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 background checks. It should be noted that the main Burlington Head Start office has had an excellent history of record keeping for all licensed Head Start/Early Head Start programs. This is recognized and duly noted. I requested staff information from Ms. Alicia Lovell, Administrative Coordinator for Head

Start/Early Head Start, Community Action of Southeast Iowa. She provided me with staff records on 5/27/2025. All staff have more than double the required hours of professional development hours. One staff had a few in person CPR certifications to finish. This is not a pattern of disregard.

The site has a specific Emergency Preparedness Plan, and all staff are trained on the plan annually. They have signed and dated acknowledgement of such. in past years.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The center is accredited by NAEYC.

The center provides vision screenings for the children.

The center provides hearing screenings for the children in cooperation with the local AEA.

The center provides dental screenings and fluoride varnish for the children in cooperation with Lee County Public Health Services.

Center staff provide Brigance screening for the children for height, weight, and social and emotional development.

Mental health services are available to the children, parents, and staff through Optimae, a counseling agency.

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

1. 109.10(13)c: Center shall develop procedures for annual staff and volunteer training on emergency plans. The OSS agreed to ensure all staff were trained on the EPP and sign and date acknowledgement of such. EPPs are hanging in each classroom.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based upon this review, it is recommended that this center remain in Full licensing status. The center is directed to continue to monitor day to day practice and adjust accordingly to continue to ensure licensing rule is met consistently. It is important to note, all DHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period.

HHS encourages you to contact your local nurse consultant Amy Hayes. 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. Please visit the following website for more information. http://idph.iowa.gov/hcci/consultants. Child Care Nurse Consultant Amy Hayes is your CCNC.

HHS encourages you to contact Child Care Resource and Referral consultant Jodi Norton. They offer centers assistance with meeting the DHS regulations, QRS, infant/toddler concerns, room arrangement and environment, developmental concerns, Best Practice information, CDA assistance, or any questions or concerns you may have. Please visit the following website for more information: http://www.iowaccrr.org Jodi Norton is the consultant for this program. Supervisor Norton provided the following the past year: have been meeting at the Burlington office to go over Licensing requirements with Angela, Alicia and Dawn. Have provided TA to Keokuk 4 times this year.

Center staff and administration should meet with CCR&R and IDPH on a regular basis.

*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.