Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Loess Hills Head Start

Provider No.: 43967

Address: 1717 Casselman St, Sioux City, IA, 51103

County: Woodbury

Director's Name: Rachael Ostermyer

On-Site Supervisor: Kelly Osborne

Phone Number: 7122586471

E-Mail: rostermyer@caasiouxland.org

HHS Visit Date: 10/12/2026

Licensing Period: 11/01/2026 to 11/01/2028

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 08/14/2025

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

- [ ] PTO
- [X] Licensing Visit
- [ ] Drop In
- [ ] Administrative Change

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

Quality Rating: 4

- [ ] Accrediation

Program Duration:

- [ ] Year-Round
- [X] School Year
- [ ] Summer Only

Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday		8:00 AM to 3:30 PM	
Tuesday		8:00 AM to 3:30 PM	
Wednesday		8:00 AM to 3:30 PM	
Thursday		8:00 AM to 3:30 PM	
Friday		8:00 AM to 1:30 PM	
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

- [ ] Infant(0-<24 Months)
- [ ] Toddler
- [X] PreSchool
- [ ] School Age
- [ ] All Ages

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General			20		20
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

I completed an unannounced visit at Loess Hills Head Start on October 12, 2026. This classroom operates within Loess Hills Elementary School. Operating hours from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Monday through Thursday and til 1:30 pm on Friday. Entry to the school is secure, with a buzzer at the main door that requires staff or school personnel to grant access.

At the time of the visit, 15 of the 18 enrolled children were present and actively engaged in learning. All components of the program were observed, including classroom interactions, instructional practices, nutrition procedures, health and safety routines, field trip and transportation procedures, and administrative documentation.

The classroom environment was warm, bright, and intentionally arranged to support child choice and independence. Displays of shapes, colors, classroom jobs, sensory materials, children's artwork, a globe, and a picture schedule created an appealing and stimulating learning atmosphere. Transitions throughout the morning were smooth and well supported. Children participated in marking their movement on the daily schedule board, reinforcing both routine and independence. Teachers interacted naturally at the children's level, engaging in meaningful conversations, guiding play, reminding children of expectations, and sharing stories. The program follows the High Scope Curriculum GOLD, which encourages active, hands-on learning. The room was structured into clearly defined areas such as dramatic play, blocks, art, writing, sensory exploration, puzzles, a quiet zone, and a cozy library space. Materials in each section were developmentally appropriate and plentiful. Visual reminders such as a feelings chart, job chart, children's artwork, and days of the week helped reinforce routines and emotional awareness. Staff interactions throughout the visit reflected warmth, patience, and a strong commitment to nurturing each child's development. Administrative documents were well organized, and all required postings were visible and accessible for families. The center participates in the CACFP program, and menus for breakfast, lunch, and snacks—prepared and delivered through Sioux City Community Schools—were posted for families to review.

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Any additional snacks brought into the classroom were properly labeled and stored. Medication was secured in a locked container out of children's reach, and procedures for administration were correctly followed. Allergy information was clearly posted with photos of each child, ensuring staff remained aware of dietary restrictions. Both children and staff practiced good handwashing procedures, and a well-stocked first-aid kit was available for minor injuries. Fire and tornado drills were documented monthly, and the room had a functioning carbon monoxide detector.
The playground just outside the classroom offered a variety of equipment, including slides, drums, balance pods, and a climbing wall. The surface consisted of rubber safety tiles, and monthly playground inspections were current and documented.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

In addition to classroom practices, the program demonstrated strong support for Head Start families through meaningful in-kind activities. Families are encouraged to participate in home–school connection projects, take part in classroom events, share their skills, or join volunteer opportunities that contribute to the children's learning experiences. Staff provide ongoing communication, developmental resources, and family engagement opportunities that help strengthen relationships and meet Head Start expectations for in-kind contributions. These efforts support not only the children's development but also the families' sense of partnership and involvement in the learning community.

A program rated at IQ4K Level 4 has demonstrated high-quality practices across all required areas. To reach this level, the program must meet every criterion from Levels 1 through 4. This includes participating in an approved nutrition program such as CACFP or NSLP and carrying out goals that promote healthier eating and increased physical activity. Staff are expected to engage in ongoing professional development, with all teaching staff completing at least twelve hours of training each year. A majority of lead teachers must also complete EC-PBIS training that aligns with the ages they serve. Level 4 programs demonstrate strong leadership. The program administrator must be credentialed at Tier 1 or above on Iowa's administrator pathway and have at least two years of administrative experience. Meeting all these expectations shows that the program consistently operates at a high standard and provides children with a safe, well-supported, and developmentally rich early learning environment

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

109.11(4)b: Record of monthly inspections of outdoor recreation area and equipment shall be kept.

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

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

Targeted Assessment: Behavior Management
I discussed with (director) their oversight of behavior management related to helping childcare staff: 1) Understand expectations, 2) managing frustrations, 3) monitor performance.

When I asked staff how they manage their own frustrations or challenging moments in the classroom, they explained that they rely on ongoing professional development, consistent team communication, and support from their behavior specialist or coach. They shared that when situations feel overwhelming, they use reflective strategies—checking in with a coworker, taking a brief moment to regulate themselves, and grounding their approach in the program's social–emotional curriculum to ensure consistency for the children.
A full license is recommended at this time. how their performance in behavior support is monitored, staff explained that the program uses regular observations, coaching sessions, and classroom walk-throughs to help them continue growing in their practice. They described the feedback process as collaborative and strengths-based, noting that guidance is aligned with Head Start Performance Standards and the expectations of their curriculum.

Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

At least one visit will be made to the center during the next year.

Date: 10/12/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Leann Steinhauer

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**.