



Health and
Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Wee Care Inc.

Provider No.: 29947

Address: 1200 Central Ave, Hawarden, IA, 51023

County: Sioux

Director's Name: Jennifer Kooi

On-Site Supervisor: Nikki Frye

Phone Number: 7125511949

E-Mail: weecarehawarden@gmail.com

HHS Visit Date: 06/22/2026

Licensing Period: 07/01/2025 to 07/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 07/08/2025

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

- ☐ PTO
- ☒ Licensing Visit
- ☐ Drop In
- ☐ Administrative Change

License Type:

- ☒ Full
- ☐ Provisional

Quality initiative:

- ☐ Accrediation

Program Duration:

- ☒ Year-Round
- ☐ School Year
- ☐ Summer Only



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

Program Population Served:

- ☒ Infant(0-<24 Months)
- ☒ Toddler
- ☒ PreSchool
- ☒ School Age
- ☐ All Ages

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	19	10	53	27	109
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

I completed an unannounced visit to Wee Care Inc. in Hawarden on 06/22/26. During my visit, I was able to speak with the center director, Jennifer Kooi. Ms. Kooi has over 35 years of experience in the childcare field and holds both her Child Development Associate (CDA) credential and National Administrator Credential. She has also participated in the LEEAD Pilot Program through Child Care Resource and Referral, further demonstrating her commitment to professional growth and leadership within early childhood education.

All areas of the program were observed. These areas observed consisted of classroom observations and activities, nutritional practices, health and safety practices, playground observation, field trip and transportation practices, and administrative review.

Each classroom contains an ample selection of toys and activities that support children's play and learning. Throughout the center, there are colorful displays featuring numbers, colors, food groups, nursery rhyme characters, children's artwork, picture schedules, treasure chests, photos of the children engaged in activities, shapes, and the alphabet. The rooms are bright, visually engaging, and thoughtfully arranged to create an inviting environment for children. There are also photos of the children and their families, as well as pictures of staff members, which help foster a sense of belonging. During my visit, I observed staff interacting with children at their level, whether participating in play or responding to questions. Staff engagement and involvement with the children were consistently positive and supportive, contributing to a warm and nurturing atmosphere.

They utilize a creative curriculum, which means the center follows a research-based approach to early childhood education that focuses on hands-on learning, exploration, and developmentally appropriate activities. This type of curriculum



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encourages children to learn through play, interaction, and discovery rather than relying solely on structured instruction. It supports all areas of development, including social-emotional skills, language, early literacy, math, science, and the arts. By using a creative curriculum, the center provides a well-rounded learning environment that helps children grow at their own pace while building confidence and curiosity. I observed staff consistently engaging with children at their level, demonstrating warm and developmentally appropriate interactions. In the infant room, staff displayed proper diapering procedures, following hygiene and safety practices. The children appeared to have a close bond with the staff, seeking them out for comfort, support, and participation in activities. This positive connection was evident in the way children interacted confidently and comfortably with caregivers throughout the center.

The center is clean, well-maintained, and has very well-organized files. They provide breakfast, lunch, and snacks on site and participate in the food program, consistently following all required guidelines. The kitchen was observed to be clean and orderly, with appropriate food storage practices in place. All opened items were clearly dated, and the kitchen staff were preparing meals in accordance with proper sanitizing procedures. Overall, the food service area reflected strong organization, sanitation, and compliance with program standards.

The center's outdoor play environment now consists of three separate playgrounds: one for children ages three and older, one for toddlers, and one designated for infants. The toddler playground and the playground for children three and older each include a variety of age-appropriate play structures and offer multiple types of ground surfaces, including grass, pavement, and pea gravel for safe fall surfacing. Both areas also feature a cement sidewalk where children can ride bikes or scooters, and helmets are provided to ensure safety. The infant playground is equipped with a variety of toys suitable for younger children and features grass surfacing along with a well-shaded area that offers protection from the sun.

Radon testing has been completed, and the results were within the normal range. The furnace is inspected annually to ensure safe operation. The center uses the ProCare system, which allows Jennifer to electronically track important data, renewal dates, and documentation, helping maintain organized and up-to-date records. The center is equipped with cameras in all rooms, and each classroom has a first aid kit available for treating minor injuries. Fire and tornado drills, as well as playground inspections, are documented monthly. The center is very resourceful in utilizing community services and maintains strong relationships within the community. They are also able to use the community gym during periods of inclement weather, ensuring children still have opportunities for physical activity.

Jennifer is very thoughtful in her responses regarding program goals. They are currently in the process of obtaining Level 2 certification in IQ4K. She speaks sincerely about how daycare staff often make too much to qualify for medical insurance assistance for their families, and how this negatively affects their ability to recruit new staff. Jennifer reflects that she is fortunate to have such long-term, dedicated employees. She wishes there were a system in place that would allow them to afford insurance.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

Achieving Level 2 certification in IQ4K demonstrates that the program is committed to going beyond basic licensing requirements and investing in meaningful quality improvement. This level shows that the program has met important standards in areas such as staff training, health and safety practices, and written policies, which helps build trust and credibility with families. Level 2 certification also opens the door to additional supports, including coaching and professional development opportunities, which help programs continue to strengthen their services. In addition, reaching Level 2 positions the program for higher future ratings and may make them eligible for certain grants or financial incentives tied to participation in IQ4K.

They maintain a strong relationship with the local school and engage in active communication about the children who will be transitioning into kindergarten. This ongoing collaboration helps ensure that staff can share important information, support each child's readiness, and create a smooth stepping-stone into the school setting. This partnership allows the children to feel more prepared and confident as they enter kindergarten.

Despite working in a field where it is often difficult to retain long-term staff, this center has successfully created an environment that supports staff longevity, which greatly contributes to the overall stability and consistency of the program.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard



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109.9(2)d: All files contain sufficient information and authorization to allow the center to secure emergency medical and dental services at any time child is in center's care.

109.11(4)a: Center must have safe outdoor program area adjacent to the center, with sufficient square footage to accommodate at least 30 percent of the enrollment capacity at any one time at 75 square feet per child. Outdoor space must: Be free from litter and unsafe materials and free from contamination by the drainage or ponding of sewage or storm water. Include safe play equipment and an area of shade. Include fencing to protect from bodies of water or vehicular traffic.

The sand box located in the older children's playground needs to be fixed. There are rough edges that could be a safety issue for splinters.

109.12(4)e: The provider shall follow safe sleep practices for infants under one year of age: Infants shall always be placed on their backs for sleep. Infants shall be placed on a firm mattress with a tight fitted sheet. Infants shall not be allowed to sleep on a bed, sofa, air mattress or other soft surface. No child shall be allowed to sleep in any item not designed for infant sleeping, including but not limited to an infant seat, car seat, swing, or bouncy seat. No toys, soft objects, stuffed animals, pillows, bumper pads, blankets, or loose bedding shall be allowed in the sleeping area with the infant. No co-sleeping shall be allowed. Sleeping infants shall be actively observed by sight and sound. If an alternate sleeping position is needed, a signed physician or physician assistant authorization with statement of medical reason is required and an expiration date

Please get a doctor's note for the two children whose crib is elevated or discontinue this practice.

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 Jennifer her oversight of behavior management related to helping childcare staff:

Jennifer shared that she feels fortunate to have longstanding staff who model positive behavior and help train new employees. She expressed confidence that her staff would ask for help when needed and described maintaining an open-door policy that encourages open communication and supports staff in feeling comfortable seeking guidance. Additionally, the center has cameras in each room, which assist in monitoring both staff interactions and children's safety.

The center needs to email consultant by 08/30/26 confirming that those items that fall below standards have been corrected.

A full license is recommended at this time at this time.

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

Date: 06/23/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Leann Steinhauer



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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>.