Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: American Home Finding Child Care Center

Provider No.: 24726

Address: 126 N Jefferson, Ottumwa, IA, 52501

County: Wapello

Director's Name: Meliza Cloke

On-Site Supervisor: Nanette Smith

Phone Number: 6416848672

E-Mail: mcloke@ahfa.org

HHS Visit Date: 02/06/2026

Licensing Period: 06/01/2026 to 06/01/2028

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 08/25/2026

Comments: completed by Ottumwa Fire Department David Cronin, Munley, Will; Cronin, David; Owens, Cole, due annually

Report Visit Type:

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

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

Quality Rating: 3

- [ ] Accrediation

Program Duration:

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

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HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday		7:00 AM to 4:30 PM	
Tuesday		7:00 AM to 4:30 PM	
Wednesday		7:00 AM to 4:30 PM	
Thursday		7:00 AM to 4:30 PM	
Friday		7:00 AM to 4:30 PM	
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	13	13			26
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

American Home Finding Child Care Center is located in three renovated classrooms on the basement level of the Lutheran Church. The center is owned and operated by American Home Finding Association, a local non profit private social service agency. The Center primarily serves children of students attending Ottumwa High School but is open to the children of school staff also. Meliza Cloke began as the Center Director in August 2015. She meets qualifications to be a Director, has a BA in Human Services and previously worked at a local Emergency Shelter for three years and was the overnight supervisor the last six months. She is typically present on site between 7:45-4:15 p.m. The center relocated last last year. It was formerly in the Ottumwa High School.

Nannette Smith has been employed at the center since September of 2006 and served as Co-Director from August of 2007-2015.

Other part time employees: Julie Park has worked part time at the center since November 2012. She has an AA degree in general sciences, and 10+ hours college credits in the field of early childhood development. She has several years of experience as well as 100s of professional development hours. Julie Park also serves as OSS. Madison Cloke was hired April 2022. The center has one extra staff on duty throughout the day.

The Center cares for newborn to preschool age children, giving priority placement to student parents. Child Care staff engage with student parents on many levels to help them stay in school and gain valuable parenting skills. AHFCCC follows the Ottumwa School District schedule and is closed on all Holiday/Breaks when school is not in session, in addition to the summer months and school cancellations/early dismissals.

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The program consists of an infant area, a toddler and preschool age area located in three different rooms. The new infant room is divided into classroom space and storage space. The spaces are open and contain age appropriate furniture and play equipment/cribs.

On 2/6/26 I made an unannounced licensing visit to American Home Finding Child Care Center and met with director, on site supervisor and other staff members. 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 Observed:

Meals are served family style in the classrooms. The kitchen contains newer equipment, sufficient storage for center food, and sufficient dish washing capacity to accommodate a center of this size. However, the center kitchen is upstairs. Posted menus indicate minimum nutritional requirements are not always being met. The school district provides food for the program, but some of the foods served to not meet CACFP guidelines. The program must follow CACFP guidelines. No food was stored on the floor and any open food items were in sealed bags or containers. No expired food items were observed. The center may access IDPH CCNC at anytime they have food or nutrition questions or a child has special dietary needs. The Consultant is located in their home office in Ottumwa (AHFA).

Center Health and Safety:

The center administers prescription and non-prescription medication in accordance with licensing regulations, physician directions, and parental consent. Medication is properly stored and documentation present. We discussed children with allergies or any special health care needs. Any medication is stored out of the reach of children.

We reviewed compliance with regulations regarding staff and child hand washing, storage and maintenance of a first aid kit, emergency plans and drills for fire and tornado, environmental testing and the maintenance of any necessary detection equipment, and general regulations regarding safety and sanitation policies and procedures.

Carbon monoxide detectors are present. The church has gas furnaces so the Director will ask the church for updated inspections. Annual fuel burning inspections are required. Radon testing has not yet been conducted The testing should indicate pCi/L levels under 4. Updated testing is due every 5 years. Testing should be conducted in winter months when the ground is frozen. The program rooms have had updated construction after 1971 and do not contain lead based paint.

The center is secured by a locked door. Parents or visitors must ring a door bell and be buzzed in.

Center Playground:

The center has a fenced cement and surfaced outdoor play area immediately beside the center. The areas are fenced and divided so that children can be separated by age. The Child Care Weather Watch should be utilized to assess whether outdoor play is appropriate due to questionable weather conditions. At times a larger room is utilized for gross motor play. We inspected the area the date of the visit. In both areas each child has a minimum of 75 square feet each for gross motor activities.

Center Transportation Arrangements/Field Trips:

The center does not provide transportation. Groups may take walks around campus which is not considered a field trip. The Director may consider the possibility of providing transportation in the future and the requirements of such.

Center Administrative Records:

Child misbehavior is addressed by redirection, positive reinforcement of appropriate behavior. The program utilized PBIS. The center is in compliance with regulations regarding required notices and postings including Mandatory Reporter information, the Center License, HHS Licensing Consultant contact information, and No Smoking signage. Required written policies are provided to parents in the form of a parent handbook.

Staff and child records were examined during this inspection. Staff and child records are mostly complete and well

organized.

Staff Files: Staff have updated professional development training due annually. They posses current CPR/1st Aid training due every two years as well as Mandatory Reporter training, SING checks, and Fingerprint results. Each staff have updated physicals, due every three years.

Child Files: Updated physicals are due annually as are updated immunization records, emergency contacts, field trip authorizations, dental and medical contact information and pick up authorizations.

The Director has historically worked with IDPH Child Care Nurse Consultant Jamie Crouse annually on child record reviews.

Center curriculum is utilized daily. Lesson Plan assistance is available through CCR&R. The center follows schedules and routines are implemented.

The center Director updated the Emergency Preparedness Plan and all staff have been trained on the plan. They have signed and dated acknowledgement of such.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

Several staff are long term employees.

The Director frequently accesses assistance from providers when necessary.

PBIS Coach Joan Garrett visits the center once every 2 months to provide consultation.

Employees are entered in IPOWER which is best practice.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

1. 109.11(3)a: Center shall ensure that: Facility and premises are sanitary, safe, and hazard free. Sufficient lighting shall be provided. Sufficient ventilation. Sufficient heating. Sufficient cooling. Equipment placed in the program area is maintained so as not to result in injury to the children. Water and cold air are coming in around the windows in the mobiles room. Staff had placed towels in the window sills to prevent cold air and moisture from coming in. Drills were not documented.

2. 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 spear 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 .Play equipment outdoors should be anchored.

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

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

Many positive changes have been made in the center since Ms. Cloke has taken on Director responsibilities. The Director should meet with IDPH CCNC Jamie Crouse and CCR&R Child Care Consultant Karen Lauer for licensing issues and best practice suggestions.

Based upon this review, it is recommended that this center remain in Full licensing status. It is important to note, all HHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period.

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

I referred Director Cloke to CCR&R in 2015 and she does access consultation services. They are available for consultation at anytime as are IDPH Child Care Nurse Consultants. HHS encourages you to contact Child Care Resource and Referral Consultant Karen Lauer. Consultant Lauer contacted the Director prior to the relocation and making a visit in 2024. In the past year including IQ4K, training and consultation on the EPP. She also toured the building prior to moving. 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.

HHS encourages you to contact your local nurse consultant. Iowa Department of Public Health Child Care Nurse Consultant Jamie Crouse (American Home Finding Association-Ottumwa) works 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. The program has a new CCNC, Kelsey Stokesberry.

The center accesses PBIS Coach Joan Garrett who conducts training/ presentations and PBIS coaching and consultation. This is best practice and duly noted.

Date: 02/12/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Jill Seibert

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**.