

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

Name of Center: NICA Head Start-Winnebago **Enrollment:** 15 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 22841

Street: 1405 West I Street **City:** Forest City **Iowa Zip** 50436 **County:** Winnebago

Mailing Address: PO Box 1627, Mason City, IA, 50402

Director's Name: Megan Judish **Phone Number:** 641-494-1891

On-Site Supervisor(s): Diane Bronson **E-Mail:** mjudisch@NICA-ONLINE.ORG

Date(s) of Visit: 01-10-2025

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

Date Inspected: 12-15-2022

Comments :

LICENSE TYPE: X **Child Care** **Preschool (ages 3-5 meets three hours or less per day)**

Financial Type: Profit X Non-Profit NA

Accreditation: 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			20		20
Summer					0

QRS Rating: 4

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

Licensing Consultant: Raymond Salsbury

Date: 01-29-2025

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 Winnebago County Head Start program on 01-10-25 where I met with lead teacher Diane Bronson. Diane took over as the lead teacher in 2017 and is well qualified with a Bachelor degree and experience in early childhood education. This program is located in a single classroom in the Forest City elementary school but is overseen by a separate board of directors through the North Iowa Community Action Organization. The program is one of several Head Start locations overseen by that organization with Megan Judish being the executive program director overseeing the various locations. The program provides preschool services only to children 3-4 years of age. There are currently 15 children enrolled in the program served by 3 teachers. All aspects of the program subject to licensing standards were reviewed during this visit.

The arrangement, design, and operation of the classroom remains the same as in prior visits. The room was observed to be clean and free of any noted safety concerns related to layout or maintenance. Restroom facilities are located outside of the classroom and children are escorted to the restroom if needed. There is a sink in the classroom to facilitate hand washing. Windows along the exterior wall provide natural light, a view of the outdoors, and serve as secondary emergency egress. All exits were clear of obstruction and opened easily and freely. The room has an open floor plan that is divided into activity centers through the use of low shelves, play structures, and furniture. The arrangement of the play structures does not create any blind areas and allows the children room to play. Each center was stocked with materials and supplies that were in good repair and appropriate to the ages of the children present. A copy of the daily schedule and curriculum were posted in an area readily accessible to parents and visitors. The planned curriculum on the day of my visit had a general theme of "Building" and this was reflected in the materials and activities that were present.

Good interactions were observed on the day of my visit with the teachers being actively engaged with the children and implementing the planned schedule and curriculum. During the visit the class moved from doing small group teacher led activities, self-directed center play, and large motor skill activity. The teachers do modify the schedule as needed with the weather conditions not being conducive to outdoor play and the school gymnasium being utilized by other classes and so the class did a walking tour of the building looking at and identifying elements of construction in support of the planned curriculum theme. The teachers do an excellent job of using positive behavior management approaches. This includes the use of not responding to non-disruptive behavior, reframing situations with a focus on positive elements, redirecting behavior, and helping the children with guided problem solving. When speaking to the children all of the teachers use very positive and encouraging tones of voice. This resulted in a classroom where there were very few problems, and for those that did arise the resolution was quick and effective. The teachers were attentive to issues of supervision with escorting the children to the restroom and letting each other know which children they were responsible for. The teachers also implement good positioning awareness to ensure supervision with having the teachers in different areas of the classroom, and when going on the building tour had a teacher in the lead, middle, and end of the line.

Good hand washing practices were observed with the teachers ensuring that they and the children washed their hands frequently and did so in an effective manner. This included after using the restroom, before meal service, and other times as needed when in the classroom such as when wiping their nose or a child that put their hands down their pants. Chemical cleaners and other items that could present a risk to children were stored in a secure location. When using chemical

cleaners in the classroom the teachers would wait for the children to be in other areas of the room. Tables were sanitized after play and before meal service. A limited first aid kit is maintained in the classroom and the program also has access to the school nurse. As noted the class did not make use of the playground during the visit due to weather conditions with the teachers using a weather chart to show that the temperatures were in the "Red Zone" and it was too cold and not safe for outdoor play.

Meals are prepared by the school and a menu is posted. Meals are modified to follow the Child and Adult Care Food Program Guidelines. Meals are served in the classroom and there is a small refrigerator in the classroom that can be used to maintain items that need to be kept cold. A limited supply of dry pantry items are also kept in the classroom and all items were properly stored. Lunch was served during the time of my visit and consisted of pizza, salad, carrots, peaches, and milk. meals are served family style with the teachers assisting the children as needed. The teachers do sit and eat with the children to provide supervision and model good eating habits. One child did have a parent come to visit at the center and have lunch with the class.

The program uses a school playground which has a climbing structure and swings, a unitary pour in place foam rubber system for fall surfacing, and shade provided by an awning. The playground area is fully enclosed by fencing. The equipment and fencing were found to be in good repair.

All required notices were posted in an area readily available to all parents and visitors. Staff files are reviewed at the program central office separately and any concerns identified are addressed at the time during that review. All child files were reviewed and found to contain all required information and documentation. All inspection logs and certificates were current and available with the exception of Radon testing. The last radon test was completed in August 2019 with tested levels of 0.8 pCi/L which is well below the allowable cutoff limit of 4.0 pCi/L. Renewed testing is required every 5 years for programs that have levels below the allowable cutoff limit and which do not have a mitigation system.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The center is participating in the IQ4K program which seeks to implement best practices standards and is currently rated a Level 4 program out of a possible 5 Level scale. In addition the program also participates in NAEYC which is a national best practice accreditation program for educational programs.

This has been a very stable center with the same teachers over the past several years which has allowed them to develop a very strong program where the teachers are supportive of each other and have a very seamless system of moving through the day. This was most noticeable in the interactions such as transitioning between activities where there was no need to communicate which activities each teacher was expected to complete, or when communicating which children they were responsible for.

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

109.11(7)b: Centers at ground level that use basement area as program space, or have a basement beneath program space: Testing and plan for remedy of radon is conducted.
-- Documentation had expired and needs to be renewed.

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 identifying 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.

