Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Humboldt County Head Start

Provider No.: 18083

Address: 401 Main St, Dakota City, IA, 50529

County: Humboldt

Director's Name: Michelle Carden

On-Site Supervisor: Nichole Kading

Phone Number: 5153323193

E-Mail: mcarden@yourhs-ehs.org

HHS Visit Date: 01/21/2026

Licensing Period: 02/01/2025 to 02/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 02/12/2025

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

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

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

- [ ] Accrediation

Program Duration:

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

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HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday		9:00 AM to 1:00 PM	
Tuesday		9:00 AM to 1:00 PM	
Wednesday		9:00 AM to 1:00 PM	
Thursday		9:00 AM to 1:00 PM	
Friday		9:00 AM to 1:00 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

An unannounced annual visit was made to the Humboldt County Head Start program on 01-21-26. The lead teacher Nichole Kading was not in on the day of visit and the class was being led by her assistant and a substitute teacher. Nichole took over the lead teacher position for the 2022 - 23 school year and is well qualified based on her experience and education. The program is operated under the oversight of Y.O.U.R Inc. and its board of directors. The program is located in a free standing modular building on the main street of Dakota City and is the only occupant of the building. The program offers preschool services only to children 3-4 years of age. There are currently 15 children enrolled in the program served by 2 teachers, and an on-site cook. All aspects of the program subject to licensing standards were reviewed during this visit.

The layout and design of the building, and programming remains the same from prior visits. The building has two rooms connected by a short hallway with the primary classroom on the west end of the building and the other room used for large motor skill activities, and for early intervention socialization programming. There is a bathroom located off the main programming space of both rooms with child sized toilets so that children do not need to leave the room. Sinks are located in the classrooms to facilitate hand washing and to allow teachers to monitor the children's handwashing. Both rooms have windows on the exterior walls that provide natural light, ventilation, and a view of the outdoors. Each room has a primary entrance so that they can be accessed independently, and both also have a secondary exit that provides direct access to the playground. All doors opened fully although the secondary exit of the large motor skill room opening on to the playground did drag when opening due to snow cover but was able to be opened fully. As a reminder staff should check all emergency exits daily to ensure that they are clear of obstruction and open easily and freely. The classrooms were observed to be clean with no immediate maintenance concerns noted. The primary classroom is a large open space that is divided into activity centers through the placement of play structures and furniture which are arranged so as not to create any blind areas. The large motor skill room is used primarily when weather conditions do not allow for outdoor play. The room was generally

left as an open area where children could use toys that require more space or otherwise engage in more active play.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

A copy of the daily schedule and curriculum was posted and was being followed on the day of the visit. The planned curriculum had a focus theme of "Clothes" and the materials present in the classroom reflected this. As an example there was an improvised laundry set in the dramatic play center that was created using a large cardboard box and laundry baskets to create a washer and dryer appliance. The toys and materials present in the classroom were observed to be in good repair and appropriate to the ages of the children present. All teachers were activity engaged with the children presenting the planned curriculum, providing for their care needs, or addressing behavioral concerns. There were several children having a difficult day behaviorally with displaying high energy levels and being very distracted from the activities that the class were engaged in. While the behaviors did not rise to the level of being defiant, destructive, or aggressive they were distracting and escalated other children into engaging in attention seeking behavior. Proactive behavior management techniques were observed during my visit with teachers attempting positive engagements techniques of reminders, redirection, and guided problem solving. There were differences between the teachers with regard to their interactions when responding to behavioral issues with some situations in which the tone of voice and style were more direct and authoritative, and others where the tone was calmer and more encouraging. At no time did any of the teachers engage in yelling, threatening, or making derogatory comments. It was identified that this level of behavioral acting out was very unusual for the children. The interventions used were effective in that the teachers were able to redirect the children in the short term but those children involved quickly turned to other situations and behaviors.

Good health and safety practices were observed on the day of the visit. The teachers did ensure that children not only washed their hands as needed but that they did so in an effective manner. This included sending children back to re-wash their hands when playing with toys and items on their way to sit down for lunch. Tables were cleaned and sanitized immediately prior to lunch service and when the children were engaged in a teacher lead group activity so that they were not in the immediate area. Chemical cleaners and other items that could pose a safety risk to children were stored where they were not accessible to children. First aid kits were present and stocked with materials necessary to address most common first aid needs.

The center does have a small kitchen and breakfast and snacks are prepared on-site. Lunch is prepared by the high school and brought to the center in temperature controlled containers. The center does have a refrigerator and stove that can be used to ensure that proper temperatures are maintained until meals can be served. A copy of both menus were posted and identify a good variety of nutritious meal options. The kitchen was observed to be clean with no indication of rodent or insect infestation. Good food handling and storage practices were observed with the children helping to set the table for lunch and teachers ensuring that they washed their hands, and wore food service gloves and hair nets before doing so. Meals are served family style in the classroom with the teachers sitting and eating with the children. Measured scoops are used to ensure that each child receives a full serving, and children are provided with additional servings if they are still hungry. Lunch was served during the time of my visit and included a chicken patty, whole grain roll, corn, and apple slices. During the visit children were observed to contaminate foods with child reaching in to a bucket with the apple slices and using their hand to grab a serving, and another child licking the butter in a serving dish. In both situations the teachers redirected the children explaining that they could no longer serve those items because they would have germs, and then requested replacements from the other tables.

The center playground remains the same as identified in prior reports. The playground is fenced and contains climbing structures and dramatic play equipment. Riding toys, balls, and other equipment are also available and maintained in a storage shed. The playground makes use of foam tiles for cushioning ground cover below the climbing structures. The playground is fully enclosed by chain link fencing. Shade is provided by the climbing structures, a large neighboring tree that would provide shade in the early morning hours, and the building which is located on the southern edge of the playground. While the playground could not be fully inspected due to snow cover the climbing structures and other equipment were observed to be in good repair. The fencing was also observed to be in good repair with no missing or broken retention clips.

All required notices for No Smoking, Consultant Contact, License Certificate, and Mandatory Abuse Reporting were posted in an area readily visible to parents and visitors. Other required postings for emergency evacuation, emergency numbers, disease exposure, handwashing, daily schedule, lesson plan, and menu were also present. All child files were reviewed and

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found to contain all required information and documentation. Staff files are reviewed annually at the program administration central office and any issues identified are addressed with the administration at that time. All Inspection certificates and logs were available and current. The center does not have any fuel burning appliances, but does maintain a carbon monoxide detector as required.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

None Cited

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

NA

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

A full license will remain in effect 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.

Date: 01/27/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Ray Salsbury

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**.