



Health and  
Human Services

## Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

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### CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: NICAO Head Start-Winnebago

Provider No.: 22841

Address: 1405 West I Street, Forest City, IA, 50436

County: Winnebago

Director's Name: Megan Judish

On-Site Supervisor: Diane Bronson

Phone Number: 6414941891

E-Mail: mjudisch@NICAO-ONLINE.ORG

HHS Visit Date: 01/12/2026

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

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#### Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 03/26/2025

Comments:

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#### Report Visit Type:

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

#### License Type:

- ☒ Full
- ☐ Provisional

#### Quality initiative:

Quality Rating: 4

- ☐ Accrediation

#### Program Duration:

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



CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

| HOURS:    | <u>Year-round</u> | <u>School-Year</u> | <u>Summer Only</u> |
|-----------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Sunday    |                   |                    |                    |
| Monday    |                   | 8:30 AM to 1:30 PM |                    |
| Tuesday   |                   | 8:30 AM to 1:30 PM |                    |
| Wednesday |                   | 8:30 AM to 1:30 PM |                    |
| Thursday  |                   | 8:30 AM to 1:30 PM |                    |
| Friday    |                   | 8:30 AM to 1:30 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          |         |         | 20        |             | 20       |
| Summer           |         |         |           |             | 0        |

1. Basic Overview

An unannounced annual visit was made to the Winnebago County Head Start program on 01-12-26 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. The classroom also has two assistant teachers, Katie Speaker who started with the center in 2019, and Dylan Bolinger who started in 2025. 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. 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 centers is such that they do 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.



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### 2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

Each of the teachers was observed to make excellent use of proactive techniques for engagement and behavior management.

During the visit the class followed the planned schedule moving from self-directed center play, to teacher lead large group activities, and lunch. Throughout this time the teachers were involved with the children joining them and asking questions to help them learn and explore their play, and solve problems that arose. This included asking questions about alternative actions and what outcomes might result in their play, or demonstrating techniques for how to achieve a specific outcome. When children had situations of conflict with peers the teachers used those same methods to provide guided problem solving to help the children resolve their frustrations. All of this was done in a manner that appeared effortless and demonstrated the value of having long term employees who have strong working relationships. Good practices were also observed with regard to supervision. During the visit the teachers were spaced throughout the classroom providing support to all of the children. When children needed to use the restroom one teacher would take the child(ren), and let the other teachers know which children they had with them.

Good health and safety practices were observed during the visit with teachers ensuring that the children washed their hands as required 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. One child did have a toileting accident and the teacher that assisted the child did follow established procedures for changing their clothing, and cleaning themselves up. 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.

Meal service remains the same as in prior reports and is prepared by the school. A menu is posted and 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. Lunch was served during the time of my visit. 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.

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. While the school is responsible to inspect and maintain the equipment the teachers should continue to assess the playground and restrict use of those elements that would require maintenance.

All required notices for No Smoking, Consultant Contact, License Certificate, and Mandatory Abuse Reporting were posted in an area readily available to all parents and visitors. Other required postings for emergency evacuation, emergency numbers, handwashing, curriculum, daily schedule, and planned menu were also present. 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.

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.

### 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



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Radon testing had been scheduled to be completed the weekend of 01/16/26 - 01/19/26 as the program would have an extended period of time with the coming holiday.

**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: 01/13/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Ray Salisbury

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>.