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

Name of Center: NICAO Head Start-Floyd County **Enrollment:** 27 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 33769

Street: 404 N Jackson St **City:** Charles City Iowa **Zip** 50616 **County:** Floyd

Mailing Address: PO Box 1627, Mason City, IA, 50401

Director's Name: Megan Judish **Phone Number:** 641-228-4515

On-Site Supervisor(s): Nicole Foster **E-Mail:** mjudisch@NICAO-ONLINE.ORG

Date(s) of Visit: 02-24-2025

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: 04-06-2023

Comments :

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

Financial Type: Profit X Non-Profit NA

Accredition: Accredited NAEYC NSACA Other X NA

Program Serves: Infants (0-23 mo.) 2 Years X Preschool-Age School-Age

Get-Well Evening Care X 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	0	32	42	0	74
Summer					0

QRS Rating: 3

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 03-01-2025 to 03-01-2027
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Raymond Salsbury **Date:** 03-06-2025

I. IF CURRENT LICENSE IS PROVISIONAL, IDENTIFY THE CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

N/A

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

An unannounced annual visit was made to NICAO-Floyd County Head Start in Charles City on 03-07-24 where I met with Nicole Foster who is the on-site supervisor and lead teacher for the Head Start class. Megan Judish is the director of the early childhood programs operated by the North Iowa Community Action Organization (NICAO) at the main office located in Mason City. The Head Start is located in the Family Resource Center in Charles City. The program does share space with other community outreach programs such as WIC. The program provides Early Head Start, and regular Head Start classes. There are currently 27 children enrolled in the the center between the two programs. All aspects of the program subject to licensing standards were reviewed.

The general arrangement and layout of the classrooms remains the same as observed in the previous report. The regular Head Start (HS) program uses two classrooms which are connected by an intervening hallway where restroom facilities are located but a mobile panel divider is used to prevent the children from moving between the rooms. The Early Head Start (EHS) also makes use of two classrooms connected by an intervening passthrough but the class only makes use of one side or the other at a time. The intervening hallway space has toilet facilities and handwashing sinks. A changing station has been set up in one of the EHS classrooms to allow staff to remain in the room for supervision, and a portable sink is available for handwashing by that changing station. Mobile fence and gate units are used to prevent the children moving between the two EHS classrooms unaccompanied. Each room has a direct exit from the room to the exterior. All exits opened easily and freely, and were alarmed so that staff would be aware if a child were to open the door. A recliner/rocker had been moved to an area in front of one of the emergency exits of the EHS classrooms. The teachers reported that this had only been done recently and it is not where it is normally maintained and would be moved. Additional bathrooms are located off the corridors of the building interior. Additional sinks are located in the classrooms to facilitate hand washing. Each room has windows along the exterior walls that provide natural light, a view of the outdoors, and ventilation. The program is making use of another room as an indoor large motor skill room for the EHS children which has tumbling mats, soft side climbers, and a jogging trampoline. Copies of the daily schedule and planned curriculum were posted for both classrooms. Each classroom makes use of furniture and play structures to define activity centers. The equipment was arranged so as not to create any blind areas.

Good interactions were observed throughout the center on the day of my visit. The HS class had combined into one group and were moving between the two classrooms using one primarily for center and small group activities, and the other for large group activities. During the visit the teachers were all observed to be engaged with the children either playing with the children, presenting the planned curriculum, or conducting individual assessments. The center uses a positive behavior management approach. The Head Start class did have several children that were observed to have several incidents of behavioral acting out and defiance. Initially the teachers did a good job of ignoring behavior that was not disruptive or unsafe working to redirect and encourage the children back to the activity at hand. Later however there was a situation where several of the children began running around the room during story time. In response two of the teachers did seek to intervene with the children who then turned the play into a game of running from the teachers and drawing in other children. It did result in the teachers catching and holding the children. While this was not done in an aggressive or forceful manner it did culminate in an incident while holding one child the child did jump striking the teacher on the jaw/lower face with the child's head. Again this was not done in an aggressive manner but more as the child was just escalated and playing. The

teacher did respond to this well with not yelling or punishing the child despite it being obvious that it did cause her pain. While the use of physical interactions such as leading or holding children is not prohibited it is not recommended given that it can easily escalate into a situation where the interaction can result in injury to children and staff. When speaking to the children the staff generally used calm, soft tones and encouraging statements. During the situation of the children running in the classroom the staff did use firm tones but in a controlled rather than angry manner. The Early Head Start classroom also used effective positive behavior supports with one example being a teacher that validated it being OK for the child to be upset but needing to use a quiet voice and helping the child identify a different way to express their feelings.

Good health and safety practices were observed on each day of my visit. Good hand washing practices were observed with the teachers reminding the children to wash their hands and observing or assisting the children to ensure they washed them in an effective manner after restroom use, before eating, and other times that they became soiled. The center does maintain a first aid kit with a supply of materials necessary to address most common first aid needs. During the visit one child did have an itchy area due to dry skin and wanted a bandaid which the teacher did apply. There were no children taking any medications but the center does have policies in place should it become necessary in the future. Allergy plans were present and posted for children with identified allergies. Chemical cleaners, personal belongings, and other items that could pose a safety risk to children are stored in areas where they are not accessible to children. Good cleaning practices were observed with the teachers waiting for children to be out of the immediate area before using chemical cleaners. Cots with individual bedding covers are used for nap time and are arranged to provide space between the children as a disease transmission barrier and access for the children and teachers. There were a couple issues that were noted during the visit though neither rose to the level of being a licensing violation. One issue was with regard to the classrooms having integrated drinking fountains in one of the sinks. One child was observed to get a drink and mouth the spigot. While no other children were observed to get a drink from that same unit after that it would need to be sanitized before other children make use. It was reviewed that having children use a cup, or water bottle to fill at the station would be a better option. The other issue that was observed during nap time was with the amount of illumination in the classrooms. The blinds had been closed and due to the day being overcast it was dark enough in the room that being able to observe children was limited. Nichole did open the blinds to allow more light in but this is something that that staff will need to monitor and adjust as needed.

Kitchen facilities are present and meals are prepared on-site. Cleanliness was observed to be an area where more attention is needed. While much of the food debris on the floor in the main kitchen area appeared to be from the current meal preparation, there was food debris in the dry pantry storage area that appeared to have been present from prior days. There was no indication or evidence of insect or rodent infestation and the center did have bait/trap stations from a pest management provider, but improving the cleaning practices would help to reduce the risk of an infestation developing due to access to food sources. Good food storage, and handling practices were observed with all food properly stored. When preparing and handling food staff did wear food service gloves, and hair nets. A menu is posted and did identify nutritious options that meet CACFP guidelines. I was able to observe lunch service during the visit and the meal served was consistent with the planned menu. Meals are served in central commons area family style with the teachers sitting at the tables eating with the children. Measured scoops are provided to help ensure that children receive a full serving.

The playground is fenced and includes a variety of toys and play structures. All climbing structures with the exception of a couple small residential grade structure have been removed. Those structures were placed over unitary foam tiles used for fall surfacing. A sand box is present and a tarp is used to cover the sandbox. Shade is provided by a covered gazebo area and mature trees. The playground is fully enclosed by fencing which was in good repair.

In reviewing administrative records all required notices were posted in an area that was readily accessible and visible to parents and visitors. In reviewing child files all were found to contain all required information. Staff files are reviewed at the program central administrative offices and any concerns identified are addressed at that time. All required inspection logs and certificates were available and current.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The center is currently participates in the IQ4K program which seeks to implement best practice recommendations. The program is rated a Level 3 out of a possible 5 level scale.

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

109.10(15)d: Daily checks to ensure all exits are unobstructed.
-- A recliner/rocking chair had been placed in front of an emergency exit. It was reported that this was not the usual area where it is maintained and would be moved.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

A full 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.