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

Name of Center: Forest City YMCA **Enrollment:** 28 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 22464

Street: 916 West I ST **City:** Forest City Iowa **Zip** 50436 **County:** Winnebago

Mailing Address: 916 W I ST, Forest City, IA, 50436

Director's Name: Faith Kahler **Phone Number:** 641-585-5220

On-Site Supervisor(s): **E-Mail:** fkahler@forestcityymca.org

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

X **Licensing Visit** X **Unannounced Visit** X **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: 10-24-2023

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 Preschool-Age X School-Age

Get-Well Evening Care Special Needs

SCHEDULE: X Year-round School-Year Summer Only

HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General				100	100
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 02-01-2025 to 02-01-2027
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Raymond Salsbury **Date:** 01-22-2025

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 Forest City YMCA School Age program on 01-10-25 where I met with the program Executive Director, Faith Kahler. Faith Kahler took over the executive director role in December 2023 and is well qualified for that role based on her experience and training. While Faith is the executive director her office is located at the Hanson Family Life main campus building. The YMCA before and after school program (BASP) operates out of the Forest City YMCA making use of several areas of the building. Given that this is a separate location the program does require an on-site supervisor. The prior supervisor for the location recently retired and the center is in the process of searching for a new On Site Supervisor. Faith did identify that Skylar Cooper and Cindy Rosa were currently acting as on-site supervisors but neither was present on the day of the visit. Faith did need to leave the visit to return to the main campus location where she was needed in ratio, and I was able to meet with the lead teacher for the evening, Shaylynn. While the building is an open facility and other YMCA patrons make use of the facilities the program is operated out of classrooms that restrict access from those individuals that are not enrolled or approved caregivers. The program merged with the Hanson Family Life center and is overseen by a board of directors for that program. The program provides services for school age children for limited periods before and after school during the school year, and for longer periods of time during the summer. There are currently 28 children enrolled in the program served by 4 staff, and a volunteer. All aspects of the program subject to licensing standards were reviewed during this visit.

The general layout of the building and programming space remains the same as in prior reports. The primary space utilized is an area that was previously designated as "The Game Room". The room is a large open space that has tables, a television, and access to a small kitchen area that does not have any appliances other than a refrigerator and microwave. Bathrooms are directly accessible from the room. The room has a separate entrance from the outside, and secondary exits from the room that lead to other activity spaces, and the gymnasium. There are windows along one of the exterior walls that provide natural light and a view of the outdoors but do not open to allow for ventilation. All areas were observed to be clean with no issues noted due to maintenance. The program also makes use of the gymnasium which makes use of a curtain divider to section off an area used by the BASP. The program would also have access to the pool but is not currently making use of those facilities. Activity centers are created through the placement of low shelves and play structures which were arranged so as not to create any blind areas. The available activity centers include options such as dramatic play, art/craft materials, media, large and small manipulatives, reading, and table games. Each activity center had a good supply of materials that were in good repair and appropriate to the ages of the children present. The center does provide sleeping mats for those children that make use of the before school programming but who are still tired and want to rest while at the center. The center uses a general monthly theme approach during the school year, and more focused weekly themes during the summer.

The visit was made during the after school hours of the program operation. A copy of the schedule as posted and has a very general plan of arrival, snack, and then center play. During visit it was noted that there was another known routine of allowing media viewing at 5:00 PM. It was also discussed that having a revised schedule that establishes more defined activity options such as a staff lead large motor skill game period, a quiet period to allow reading or completion of homework, child directed center play, and media time could help to create breaks in activity that can allow children to expend pent up energy, and then reduce stimulation and excitement levels. One example that was provided was a reference

to several children that were engaged in a high energy spinning top battle game, Bey Blades, which did result in escalating excitement and behavior. While not rising to the level of conflict there was significant risk for problems as the children started to become more physical with each other.

The staff that were present were engaged with the children during the time of the visit both playing with the children and supervising their play. Staff were well positioned when the group was divided with one being in the gym with several children, and the other and the volunteer in the main room. The staff were attentive to the needs of the children and responded to behavioral issues by engaging in a more informal manner that was effective in redirecting the children's behavior. During the visit one of the staff members did identify some concerns regarding the volunteer that at the program and inquired about purview of Licensing Standards with regard to oversight of those individuals. It was reviewed that while licensing does require that volunteers have a clear record check history, and cannot be left as the sole caregiver to children it is up to the center staff and administration to ensure that Licensing Standards and center policies are being implemented. The staff member stated that there have been concerns that the volunteer tends to favor interactions with the female children and there have been concerns expressed by children and staff that they have felt uncomfortable with some of the interactions. The staff member was informed that this something that should be communicated to the program administration. It is noted that I did speak with Faith by phone about the identified concerns following the visit. During the visit the volunteer was observed to engaged in a table top card game with the children and while many of the children were female a male child did join the game later. No concerning or inappropriate interactions were observed.

During visit one concern was observed was with regard to parental pick-up which while not rising to the level of being a violation does have the potential to result in a situation of a lost or missing child. The center does maintain a sign-in sheet for children that attend the program but when parents arrive there is no formal process for them to make contact with the staff and sign their child out. During the visit the process consisted of staff just noting when parents arrived and signing the children out which did result in some situations where the staff never spoke to the parents. Having a formal process of the parent meeting with staff to acknowledge the exchange of custody would help to reduce the risk of staff not noticing a parent picked up a child, or a child eloping from the program and staff thinking the child had been picked up. It would also provide for the staff to have an opportunity to speak to the parents about the children's day and any concerns that may have arisen.

Good health and hygiene practices were observed with the children washing their hands after restroom use, and prior to meal service. The facility custodians do provide for the general cleaning and maintenance of the facility but the program also maintains spray bottles of a sanitizing/disinfecting solutions to clean as needed. Chemical cleaners, purses, and other items that could present a safety risk to children were maintained in areas where they were not readily accessible to the children. The YMCA does maintain a large first aid kit stocked with items necessary to address common first aid needs and the program does have access to the kit.

Due to the limited hours of operation meals are not served but snacks are provided. During the morning hours of operation, and during the summer the center takes the children to the school for breakfast and lunch under the school nutrition program. In the after school hours the center provides the children with a snack. While a pre-planned menu was not prepared a calendar of items that were served is maintained. The snack provided on the day of my visit consisted of Goldfish crackers and water. While the center does not participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) for reimbursement those guidelines are still required to be followed. Those guidelines do require that two credible snack options are provided from different food groups and while water should always be available it is not considered a credible food option. Offering children options such as a grain and fruit, or low fat milk or 100% juice were discussed. Food storage practices do need to be reviewed as there were several bulk packaged items not stored in air tight sealable food grade containers after the original packaging seal had been broken.

All required notices were posted in an area that was readily visible and accessible to parents and visitors. Staff files are now maintained at the program main office of the Hanson Family Life Center and are reviewed during the licensing visit to that location. Child files were reviews and found to contain all required information however the forms being used did not have a well developed Parental Statement of Health form. The center did have allergy, and health plans for those children who had identified concerns. Inspection certificates were current and available for all required elements. with the exception of Fire and Tornado drills which had not been conducted or logged since August 2024. It was reviewed that these must be conducted and logged monthly.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

This program provides a critical need in the community for families that need care options for limited timeframes for older children. The program has had a significant change with regard to administration and the departure of the on-site supervisor who had been with the program for many years. Despite not having an identified and approved on-site supervisor the center and staff have continued to provide continuity of care and a strong program.

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

109.6(2): Director or on-site supervisor on-site during the hours of operation or a minimum of six hours of center's hours of operation.
Information on on-site supervisor's qualifications is submitted to the consultant prior to employment and is sufficient to make a determination.
On-site supervisor meets qualifications or is "qualifiable" with a plan established to meet qualifications.
-- The center does not currently have an approved on-site supervisor and is using designated "in-charge" staff for interim center oversight while searching for a new on-site supervisor.

109.10(15)b: Emergency instructions, phone numbers, and diagrams for fire, tornado, and flood shall be visibly posted and documented at least once a month for fire and tornado. Records shall be maintained for current and previous year.
-- Drills were not conducted/documented since August 2024.

109.15(1): Center shall serve each child a full, nutritionally balanced meal as defined by CACFP guidelines.Staff shall provide supervision at table during snacks and meals.Children at center two hours or longer shall be offered food of not less than two hours and no more than three hours apart unless child is asleep.
-- Snacks must include a credible snack option from two different food groups. Children were offered only one credible snack option

109.15(5)b: Sanitary and safe methods in food preparation, serving, and storage sufficient to prevent transmission of disease, infestation, and spoilage are followed.Staff preparing food that have injuries on hands wear protective gloves.Staff serving food use clean serving utensils and have clean hands/wear protective gloves.
-- All food items whether intended for child consumption or not must be stored in air tight sealable food grade containers once the original packaging seal has been broken.

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 non-licensing 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.