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

Name of Center: YMCA Early Learning Center **Enrollment:** 43 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 22554

Street: 669 S Hackett RD **City:** Waterloo Iowa **Zip** 50701 **County:** Black Hawk

Mailing Address: 669 S Hackett RD, Waterloo, IA, 50701

Director's Name: Bekah Sanders & Brandon Bennett **Phone Number:** 319-233-3531

On-Site Supervisor(s): Bekah Sanders & Brandon Bennett **E-Mail:** bstevens@blackhawkymca.org

Date(s) of Visit: 03-21-2025

Licensing Visit X **Unannounced Visit** X **Off Year Visit** **Administrative Change**

LICENSING VISITS

New Application **Re-Application** X **NA**

Signed Application (470-0722) Received **Yes** **No** X **NA** **Date Signed:**

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

Date Inspected: 10-20-2023

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: X Infants (0-23 mo.) X 2 Years X Preschool-Age 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	25	16	47		88
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 05-01-2024 to 05-01-2026
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Becky Frost **Date:** 03-31-2025

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

N/A

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

On 03/21/25 I made an unannounced off year licensing visit to YMCA Early Learning Center in Waterloo. I met with Bekah Sanders, a director of the ELC and Director of Youth Development for the YMCA. Ms. Sanders has a BA in social work and Spanish. She has been employed by the YMCA since September 2020 and became a co-director in January 2022. She has previous experience at a childcare center. Ms. Sanders and Brandon Bennett are co-directors for the YMCA. Mr. Bennett is a director for the YMCA SAC program and the Executive Director of Program. Mr. Bennett started with the YMCA on 10/05/22. He has previous experience in childcare, including as an assistant director, in Minnesota. Mr. Bennett is primarily in charge of the school age programs and Ms. Sanders primarily oversees the early learning center and Montessori program. Joe Espinosa is the youth development coordinator.

Norman Johnson is the chief executive director. There are twenty-five staff members employed by the YMCA ELC and Montessori program. The ELC program started a partnership with Tri-County Head Start beginning in January 2016. The program director for Head Start is Angela Barth and the family worker from Head Start is Grace Parsley. Dr. Robert Welch is the executive director for Head Start.

The center is in the Black Hawk County YMCA. The program operates Monday through Friday from 7:00 am until 5:00 pm. It serves children who are six weeks old through preschool-age. There is also a Montessori at the Y program that started in the YMCA in the fall of 2023. The Montessori hours are Monday through Friday 9:00 am until 1:00 pm. There are currently 43 children enrolled.

The program operates out of five rooms: Infants (six weeks through about 12 months old), pre-toddlers (12 months until two-years-old), two and three-year-old room, a preschool (four and five-years-old) and a Montessori room. An inspection of each room was completed. Windows provide natural lighting in most of the rooms. Artificial lighting is used in the two and three-year-old room. The rooms are decorated with the children's art projects, and posters to assist the children with the learning process, such as the alphabet, shapes, colors and numbers. There is an area for circle time in each of the rooms, except the infant room.

The centers observed on the day of the licensing visit include library, Lego/blocks, table toys, games, puzzles, transportation, art, dramatic play, tablets, writing, math, science/discovery, Play-Doh, sensory table and music. Centers were arranged in a manner that allowed easy movement between activities, but it also allowed for clear supervision by staff members. Materials were in good condition. The materials are located at child level, so they were easily accessible to the children.

I did talk with staff members in the preschool room about keeping the medication and bleach out of the reach of children.

The center primarily uses the Creative Curriculum to develop lesson plans. They also use a variety of resources to come up with craft ideas and activities. The GOLD assessments are completed on all the Head Start children. The YMCA Early Learning Center conducts assessments on all children at least three times annually. The first is assessment is done within the first 45 days of the new school year or the child's first day of attendance. The second assessment is done midyear and

the third assessment is done at the end of the school year. The infants, pre-toddlers, toddlers and preschool children all receive the ASQ and ASQ-SE assessments. The preschool children also receive the Brigance assessment and Communication checklist.

The program implements PBIS training in the classrooms. PBIS is terrific and teaches staff members to deal with difficult behaviors in a positive manner. Second Step is used for social/emotional learning. The program also uses Mighty Minutes and Intentional Teaching Cards. Sarah Camann is the lead teacher in the preschool room. She has a BS in middle childhood through early adolescence education and a minor in special education.

Parent-teacher conferences occur twice each year, in the fall and spring. Head Start families also have two home visits each year.

The program participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Julie Barth is the cook/kitchen manager. The center provides the children with breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. The YMCA prepares everything on site. Ms. Barth states she uses a four week cycle of menus. The older children are served family style and younger children are served their food.

Parents provide the formula, baby food and cereal for the infants who are not involved in Head Start. If children are enrolled in Head Start, the center provided the formula, baby food and cereal. Bottles are washed in the infant room using the three-step method which includes sanitizing the bottles. They have a bottle sanitizer in the room.

There are two refrigerators in the infant room. There is a full-size refrigerator in the storage closet and thermometers were present. There is a smaller refrigerator in the room and a thermometer was present in the refrigerated area but must also be placed in the freezer portion.

The kitchen is a small area, but it was recently updated and looks nice. The kitchen will be expanded during the renovations. Dishes are washed and sanitized using the three-step method or put through the dishwasher. There is a refrigerator and thermometers were present. There is a pantry across from the kitchen. Food items were stored according to NHSPS guidelines in the kitchen and pantry. There are two refrigerators in the pantry and thermometers were present.

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. I reviewed documentation of monthly playground inspections. A radon test was completed in April 2024. The fuel burning inspection was completed and no concerns were noted. A carbon monoxide detector was on site and is in the preschool room near the entrance. Outlets were covered. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 10/20/23. Fire inspections are good for three years.

There is a phone in the infant and preschool rooms and emergency numbers were posted. The program's address and phone number were posted as mandated. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and evacuation diagrams were posted by all the main program doors and outdoor exits in the center. A daily schedule was posted for each room. Lesson plans were available for review in each room.

The pre-toddlers, toddlers, three, four and five-year-old rooms have use of two bathrooms. Each bathroom has one toilet and a sink and handwashing procedures were posted in both locations. There is a birdbath sink outside of the bathrooms and procedures were posted.

There is a changing table in the pre-toddler room and the two and three-year-old room. Diaper changing procedures were posted in both locations. I discussed a diaper change in the pre-toddler room and proper procedures are followed.

In the infant room there are two sinks and one diaper changing table. Handwashing and diaper changing procedures were posted. I observed a diaper change and proper procedures are followed.

Diapers and wipes are provided by the YMCA for the Head Start children. Feeding and changing schedules for the children were posted in the infant room. Daily sheets are maintained on the ProCare app in the infant and pre-toddler rooms.

Bleach is used to sanitize the food tables and disinfect the changing tables.

The parent information is located inside the entrance of the childcare area for the older children, inside the infant room and inside the Montessori classroom. The mandatory reporter, childcare consultant and the handbook availability were posted. The license was conspicuously hung. A no-smoking sign was posted at the entrance.

The program has a large fenced in playground space for the children. Rubber tiles are used for surface cushioning. There is a larger piece of climbing equipment with slides, a climbing wall and other activities. There is also a smaller piece of climbing equipment with a slide. There is a teeter totter, riding toys, spinning toys, rocking toys and a playhouse. There are benches so the children can rest. There is also a large grassy area. There is a smaller grassy fenced in area with smaller equipment. If the infant children come outside, they use this area. There is a tarp for shade and a large tree for shade.

The indoor playground area (Clubhouse) has mats for fall surfacing. There is a piece of climbing equipment that has a bridge, a tunnel and a slide. There are also several centers in the area, such as dramatic play, library, blocks, art, and sensory items. There are also riding toys.

There is detailed information posted about the children's needs and routines in each room. Staff members talked with the children about having calm bodies and about sharing. Timers were used so that every child had time to play at popular centers. Positive redirection was used when necessary. Staff members set clear rules and expectations. They had great teamwork and provided the children with praise. Staff members sang with the children during transitions which helped maintain their attention. Rooms rewarded the children with stickers for potty training. I observed staff members on the floor actively engaged in play with the children. They were spread out in the room for supervision. Staff members talked with children about problem solving and included the children in the process. The children appeared to enjoy their time at the program.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

Ms. Sanders states the staff members really care about the children and she is proud of that.

Ms. Sanders states the staff members have improved on developing their lesson plans and how to tie them into things such as Second Step, Mighty Minutes and Intentional Teaching Cards. Staff members have worked with Angie Syhlman, the curriculum person from Head Start.

Ms. Sanders states they recently hired more staff members, which helps her not be in the classrooms as often.

Ms. Sanders states they created a "specials" and closing checklist. They are making sure things are thoroughly cleaned and certain items, such as door handles) are done twice.

Ms. Sanders states the teachers make two home visits and have two additional conferences for Head Start children. Private pay parents have two conferences each year.

The YMCA is under reconstruction and they are hoping to have it completed by July 2025. The childcare center is moving to a new area of the building. The rooms will be created specifically for childcare.

Ms. Sanders states their number one priority is children and staff safety.

The YMCA partners with Tri-County Head Start and it has changed and improved the entire dynamic of the center. The staff members are receiving more training and staff members are required to work toward obtaining their CDA's. This has allowed staff members to see their own opportunity for growth and they see this now as a profession, rather than just a job.

The childcare program is in a secured area of the YMCA. The infant room and Montessori program are outside of this space but have locked doors for security.

The program accepts Child Care Assistance through DHS, Promise Jobs Funding is available while parents are at work or school and parents can apply for a YMCA Scholarship to help pay for childcare.

The YMCA offers the children swim days, and they have regularly scheduled swim time at the pool in the YMCA.

The childcare has use of the gym, an indoor playground area and an outdoor playground area.

The program works with Central Rivers AEA to identify and assist children with special needs.

Full time employees receive benefits through the YMCA.

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

N/A

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

A full license is issued for the remainder of the licensing period. All DHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period.

*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.