Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Eichacker Center

Provider No.: 21180

Address: 3433 Avenue O, Fort Madison, IA, 52627

County: Lee

Director's Name: Matthew LeClere

On-Site Supervisor: Heather Harris

Phone Number: 3193724471

E-Mail: matthew.leclere@caofseia.org

HHS Visit Date: 03/26/2026

Licensing Period: 05/01/2025 to 05/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 06/24/2025

Comments: completed by Joey Herren Inspector Fort Madison Fire Department, due annually. HHS reached out to OSS Lopez on 4/17/24 requesting an updated and approved fire inspection. An approved inspection was sent to HHS on 4/25/24

Report Visit Type:

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

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

Quality Rating: 4

- [ ] Accrediation

Program Duration:

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

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HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday		8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	
Tuesday		8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	
Wednesday		8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	
Thursday		8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	
Friday		8:00 AM to 5:00 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			36		36
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

The Eichacker Center is located in an older, single-story masonry building in a residential area of Ft. Madison. The center provides a Head Start program designed for two separate classes of 15 children each. The center is owned and operated by Community Action of Southeast Iowa, a not-for-profit community action corporation headquartered in Burlington, IA. The building also houses the Neighborhood Community Center for that agency. The community center is separated from the child care area by a closed door. The Director (2019) for the program is Matthew LeClere. Mr LeClere has a BA in Elementary Education, a BS in Education Administration, with an endorsement in Special Needs. He has worked for many years (18+) in the capacity of teacher and principal at a public school district. Director LeClere is director of several Head Starts in the area for Community Action. He has held this position since 2019.

On 3/26/26, I made unannounced licensing visit to the Eichacker Center and met with staff members present. The center has new employees (2023 and 2024). Heather Harris is the family service worker and OSS and is present daily. She has been employed with HS since 2011. The nutrition aide, Denise has been employed with the program since 1997.

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On 2/14/25, I made unannounced off year visit to the Eichacker Center and met with staff member. Ms. Harris qualifies as On Site Supervisor at the program. She was formerly OSS at another licensed childcare program. I typically meet with Heather Harris, Family Development Specialist. Ms. Harris has been employed at the center since 2006 and is a former teacher.

The program offers one 6.5 hour class five days per week for preschool age children.

Observations of Program Area:

The visit consisted of classroom and building area review and observations of activities, ratios, nutritional practices, health and safety practices, playground observation, field trip and transportation practices, and administrative review.

The center is comprised of a main floor classroom and a basement classroom that also doubles as a cafeteria. A full kitchen is also located in the basement. Teachers have an office on the main floor. The classrooms are functional and clean. The building is clearly nearing the end of its useful life as a child care center. The main floor classroom provides most of the curriculum area. The basement classroom is used for large group activities and for meals. Restrooms are available on both levels for the children. The classrooms are self-contained with phones, restrooms and emergency exits to the outside. The classrooms are furnished with a satisfactory variety of child sized furniture, equipment, toys, games, and activities for the children.

Off of the main program area downstairs is another small storage room. It is cluttered. The children do not have access to this area.

Center Nutrition Practices:

Meals and snacks are prepared on-site by a cook specifically hired for that function. I met with the cook, Denise Mahoney on this and many past visits. Ms. Mahoney has been a Head Start employee since 1997. She also prepares meals for the

nearby Richardson School Head Start site. Meals are served family style and menu patterns indicate that minimum nutritional requirements are met.

Lunch, breakfast and snacks are prepared on site. Food was stored per code. There was no food stored on the floor. Food is ordered weekly. Menus were noted to have very little processed food and the cook should be recognized for the extra work she must commit to which I believe meets best practice standards. Due in part from weekly ordering and very little processed items, there were no expired food items. Drawers were very organized. The Center cook cleans and washes dishes by hand (3 step method). The kitchen area contains a sanitizer in the kitchen area for post washing. I observed thermometers in the refrigeration/freezer units. They read recommended temperatures. New freezers were purchased this past year.

The children must go downstairs for lunch. A gate separates the upstairs and downstairs by a secure railing. The children utilize these stairs daily. The stairs are somewhat steep, as the building is older. Children eat in the basement area. A dining space is attached to but separated from a kitchen area where all meals are prepared. Cabinets are located in the basement room for extra storage and have been anchored as recommended last year. All electrical outlets in the main center room were covered. A small water fountain is available for use near the bathroom. All waste containers were covered.

The menu for the month was posted in the main preschool room. Menus meet CACFP requirements. Food and other allergy action plans should be posted in the classrooms so staff may reference the plans in the event of an emergency. They are also posted in the kitchen.

The kitchen basement window has been covered to keep bugs out of the food preparation area.

Center Health and Safety:

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The classrooms offer small kitchen like furniture and other well-kept leather furniture. A sensory table containing sand is also available. A painting station is available which I observed children using during free time. Interest centers available to the children include: blocks, dramatic play, children's literature, toys and games, puzzles and small manipulatives, art, sensory table, music and movement, science and discovery, and computer area. The room contains coat racks and cubbies for the children. A staff office is attached. The children do not have access to this area. The center also has a computer center.

The restroom contains one small sink and one toilet. Adequate toileting supplies were available the day of the visit. An appropriate paper towel dispenser is available. Hand washing posters are in plain sight. Cleaning supplies are kept in a child safe cabinet in the restroom area. Walls in the area
closer to the floor in the bathroom around the toilet appear to have some leakage/ bubbling. The restroom appeared to be generally clean and hand washing posters were present.

Staff assisted the children with hand washing. The main preschool room has an exit door with direct access to the outdoors. This emergency exit area leads to a small, fenced area of the neighbor's property which contains wheelbarrows, ladders and other gardening supplies. This exit is not utilized for fire drills and would only be utilized in case one of the other exits is blocked.

Prescription and non-prescription medication storage procedures were in accordance with licensing regulations, physician directions, and parental consent. If the preschool has medication it is kept in a lock box in the staff office. Any child with allergies must have an allergy action plan on file. Child Care Nurse Consultant Amy Hayes can assist with this plan or other special health care plans. Staff supervising the children should be trained on these plans. The program has one child allergic to morphine. A plan is not necessary since the child should never have access to morphine in the facility.

Storage and maintenance of a first aid kit were reviewed. First Aid Kits are downstairs in the top of a cupboard and upstairs hanging on the door. A quiet area for sick or injured children is designated in the main preschool room (pillow area).

We reviewed compliance with environmental testing and maintenance of any necessary detection equipment. A lead based paint review was completed November 21, 2008. At that time the center worked with the Lee County Health Department to resolve lead based paint concerns. Part of the conditions of the environmental sampling of the property was below standards. After cooperation with the IDPH and following specific recommendations from IDPH the property passed clearance in 2008 and was classified as lead safe at that time. It was noted in the report, "However please note that the lead safe classification does not mean that this property is free of lead based paint. You must maintain the painted surfaces in good condition or keep them covered in order to avoid the possibility of future lead based paint hazards. If any painted surface containing lead based paint begins to deteriorate you should repair it immediately."

In 2014 I met Cyndi Mason, the Iowa Department of Public health Nurse for the area at the facility to observe the windows, walls, carpeting, and pipes for lead paint or mold. Cyndi and Monte Hawley (facilities coordinator for 8 Head Start programs) went over the last lead based paint assessment conducted again by IDPH in 2016. Lead based paint should be monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure cracking or chipping paint is not accessible to children. An updated assessment should be completed by maintenance or HS staff regarding any chipping paint.

Windows in most of the program space have been covered. A dehumidifier is in the basement area (was added 6 years ago). A janitor comes in nightly and spends 3 hours to conduct deep cleaning. Staff also does general cleaning daily. I reviewed the inspection book. The center replaced the furnace several years ago. Furnace inspections have been conducted annually. A non-battery operated carbon monoxide detector meeting UL standards is kept in the furnace area. A detector should be on each floor of the building. I observed such. Units will have an expiration date on the unit itself or on unit packaging. The preschool is on city water; there for water analysis is not mandatory. The building is cooled by a window air conditioning unit. The basement has little natural light. Light is provided by artificial overhead lighting. Radon testing is completed every five years. Result are less than 4 pci/L.

Regulations regarding safety policies and procedures were reviewed. The lunch area where the children dine has several child sized tables and chairs. All electrical outlets in this area were covered. The children also practice literacy activities in this area. In the corner a large rug is present where circle time is conducted. Emergency plans and drills for fire and tornado were observed. They were documented monthly per my observation (copies in site book and in the room).

I reviewed regulations regarding sanitation policies and procedures. The preschool restroom is the only restroom on the top

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floor of the entire building. A restroom should be available for every 15 children. There is an additional restroom in the basement containing two stalls and a small sink. Hand washing posters were noted.

Center compliance with regulations regarding staff and child hand washing were reviewed and in compliance the date of the visit.

Center Playground:

Areas for outdoor play are located in the front, side, and rear of the center. The areas are fenced and naturally shaded. The area features an anchored and relatively low metal/plastic climbing and activity structure on rubber matting surfacing. The center has two elevated gardening activity stations. The area has a small amount of grass surfacing and a concrete runway for tricycle and big wheel riding. The front entrance to the building contains a fenced play area. The equipment and surrounding perimeter did not appear to have any safety hazards. A tricycle is available for riding. A locked storage shed is contained in the front concrete play area. The play area contains a sandbox which has a tarp covering it. The tarp has been elevated as to avoid water pooling. The play area has two entrance and exit gates. Both gates (back and front gates were both closed). The area also contains a mirror structure for the children's use. In the back of the building more age appropriate toys are situated on synthetic grass carpeting. An air conditioner is also in this area that has a barrier around it, which is an improvement from years past. This area also contains a storage shed. I would not recommend balls or equipment/toys (jump ropes) that can be thrown in this area as power lines are hanging approximately 25 feet above the play area. Screws on the fence have been cut, capped or turned around.

Monthly playground inspection records were reviewed. A mobile First Aid pack that is taken outdoors. The Child Care Weather Watch is utilized to determine if outdoor play is appropriate due to varying weather conditions. Michelle Stafford is the building maintenance worker.

Center Transportation Arrangements/Field Trips:

Children are transported to and from the center each day and on field trips by a school bus vehicle owned and operated by Community Action of Southeast Iowa. Transportation is provided throughout the school year.

Center Administrative Records:

Child misbehavior is addressed by careful planning of the classroom structure and the child's daily routine, modeling, positive reinforcement of appropriate behavior, and redirection. Staff and child records are reviewed on licensing visit years. The curriculum utilized is Creative Curriculum.

Staff file information was provided to me Ali , Administrative Specialist, Community Action of Southeast Iowa Head Start/Early Head Start Burlington Head Start Main Office on 3/18/25. The program has four employees. Information provided includes updated fingerprint results (every 4 years), Iowa Criminal Background checks (2 years), current physicals (3 years) and all training requirements including CPR/First Aid, etc... It should be noted the Head Start main office has an excellent history of record keeping. Staff are traditionally well trained and meet all requirements.

Child files including updated physicals, immunizations, emergency contact information are reviewed annually including updated physicals, field trip and pick up authorizations, dental and medical information and emergency contacts. This information is kept in Child Plus.

Compliance with regulations regarding required notices and postings were reviewed. A No Smoking sign is posted on the front door. Emergency information including evacuation exit plans was posted. A mandatory reporting form and instructions are in the hallway. Licensing consultant contact information and the license are visibly posted. A parent board hangs in the upper level room. It contains class schedules and curriculum. Another main parent board hangs in the hallway across from the family development specialist.

Further reviewed were regulations regarding required written policies provided to parents in the form of a parent handbook. The center handbook included a curriculum statement, emergency contacts for the children, as well as universal precautions and evacuation of an immobile child policy.

I reviewed the annual emergency procedures preparedness plan. It is now complete for this specific site. Staff have signed

and dated acknowledgement of training on the plan. An emergency preparedness kit is present.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

The center is accredited by NAEYC.

The center provides vision screening services for the children.

The center provides hearing screening services for the children.

The center provides dental screening and fluoride varnish services for the children in cooperation with Lee County Department of Public Health.

The center provides Brigance screenings to the children to monitor height, weight, and social/emotional development.

Head Start replaced a ramp.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

1. 109.8(2): Ratio maintained in center as required: Brief absence of staff person permitted for 5 or less minutes when another staff person is present. At least one staff is present in every room where children are resting. If ratio reduced to one staff per room during nap time, does not exceed one hour and ratio in center is still maintained. Ratio in infant rooms is always maintained. When more than eight children are present on the licensed premises, at least two staff members shall be present. For a period of two hours or less at the beginning and end of the center's hours of operation, one staff member may care for eight or fewer children, provided no more than four of the children are under two years of age and there are no more than eight children in the center. Ratio exceeded for school-age children when school classes unexpectedly start late, are dismissed early, or cancelled. For no more than four hours, care is limited to children already in the program and licensed capacity is not exceeded. A floater is only present for part of the day. If staff have to use the restroom, attend to clients up front, make copies or attend to a child having behavioral issues, the program is left out of ratio. A floater should be present for at least half the day to ensure staff are able to use the restroom, etc.

2. 109.11(3)a: Center shall ensure that: Facility and premises are sanitary, safe, and hazard free. Sufficient lighting shall be provided. Sufficient ventilation. Sufficient heating. Sufficient cooling. Equipment placed in the program area is maintained so as not to result in injury to the children. The basement stairs are degrading. This poses a potential safety hazard if children and staff have to flee the building in an emergency. this is a fire exit. The neighbor's property borders a fire exit, and some gardening tools are accessible
to children. Staff are aware and have a plan in place if this exit must be used to ensure children are not injured exiting the building. These issues were noted in years past. The front gate isn't closing properly.

3. 109.11(8)b: Centers at ground level that use basement area as program space, or have a basement beneath program space: Testing and plan for remedy of radon is conducted. Testing is due every 5 years. Radon testing is overdue.

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

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

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Staff are doing the most with the building they are to utilize. They may relocate sometime this year or next.

Based upon this review, it is recommended that this center remain in Full licensing status. The center is directed to correct the items listed in Section IV. Staff gave me a verbal commitment that the noted rule violations would be promptly corrected. It is important to note, all DHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period.

The center may reach out to CCR&R Consultant Malia Love or Iowa Department of Public Health Child Care Nurse Consultant Amy Hayes at any time for consultation.

Child Care Nurse Consultants work with child care and early education businesses. Businesses may call or send questions to a child care nurse consultant about health and safety policies, health programs, health of personnel, and specific child health or safety issues. CCNC Hayes conducted an Immunization audit two years ago. They receive monthly newsletters and updates from IDPH. I asked CCNC Hayes if she provided the program services this past year in March 2026. As of 4/8/26, no reply.

Child Care Resource & Referral offer centers assistance with meeting the HHS regulations and IQ4K. Consultant Supervisor Jodi Norton reported the following services provided in 2024/2025, "I haven't been to either site in-person this year but have provided consultation around licensing notebook, children's files, staff PD, allergy action plans, staff physicals and background checks, IQ4K, etc...

This past year she provided the following, "I was at Eichacker on 2/25 for an observation. Everything looked pretty good! They did add tv's to every site, and they are using them for transitions, music and circle time. The program renewed at IQ4K Level 4 so that was the bulk of the work over the last year. "

Jodi Norton
Child Care Consultant Lead
Child Care Resource & Referral of Southeast Iowa
Community Action of Eastern Iowa
jnorton@caeiowa.org

T: 319-321-8810
500 E 59th St.| Davenport, IA 52807| www.iowaccrr.org
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TARGETED ASSESSMENT:

The Director and I discussed behavioral management strategies. He stated, "Staff are supported in behavior management through PBIS aligned training introduced at orientation and reinforced through ongoing coaching and support meetings. Our mental health practitioner provides additional monthly consultation to all classrooms. All these strategies are grounded in a focus on staff wellness and de-escalation. Expectations are continuously monitored through coaching observations and feedback, with leadership intentionally embedding these practices into teaching, supervision, and evaluations to ensure consistency and accountability."

Date: 04/08/2026

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HHS Licensing Consultant: Jill Seibert

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**.