Health and Human Services

# Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

## CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Conmigo Early Education Center

Provider No.: 26659

Address: 828 Scott Ave, Des Moines, IA, 50309

County: Polk

Director's Name: Kay Strahorn

On-Site Supervisor: Ashley Miranda

Phone Number: 5152420225

E-Mail: kstrahorn@herdsm.org

HHS Visit Date: 03/26/2026

Licensing Period: 04/01/2025 to 04/01/2027

**Fire Inspection:**

Date Inspected: 08/11/2025

Comments: Fire inspections due at least once every three years; completed by FF John Tucker--Des Moines Fire Dept

**Report Visit Type:**

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

**License Type:**

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

**Quality initiative:**

Quality Rating: 3

- [ ] Accrediation

**Program Duration:**

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

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| HOURS: | *Year-round* | *School-Year* | *Summer Only* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sunday | | | |
| Monday | 6:30 AM to 5:30 PM | | |
| Tuesday | 6:30 AM to 5:30 PM | | |
| Wednesday | 6:30 AM to 5:30 PM | | |
| Thursday | 6:30 AM to 5:30 PM | | |
| Friday | 6:30 AM to 5:30 PM | | |
| Saturday | | | |

**Program Population Served:**

- [X] Infant(0-<24 Months)
- [X] Toddler
- [X] PreSchool
- [X] School Age
- [ ] All Ages

| LICENSE CAPACITY | Infants | 2 Years | Preschool | School-Aged | Capacity |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| General | 42 | 20 | 67 | 31 | 160 |
| Summer | | | | | 0 |

**1. Basic Overview**

An unannounced full licensing visit was completed 3/26/26. The director was present throughout the visit.

Conmigo Early Education Center is housed in the Hispanic Educational Resource Center. This bi-lingual educational center provides a variety of services to the children and families of the community including ESL classes, parenting courses and childcare. On July 1, 2011 the name of the center was changed from Xochipilli to Conmigo Early Education Center. The word Conmigo means "with me".

The child care program was first offered in 1995. The center has a secure entrance and is the sole occupant of the building.

Kay Strahorn is the Director, starting in this role in August of 2022. Kay has a Bachelor's degree in Early childhood and elementary education.
Kay has 17 prior years of experience in childcare settings.

The center offers care to children who are infants up to school age. The center continues to offer summer care to school age children, however does not provide before or after school programming to the school age children. Conmigo has recently renovated with two new rooms for infants/toddlers.

The center hours are from 6:30 am - 5:30 pm.

Room observations/activities: Conmigo utilizes Creative Curriculum for infants/toddler and Frog Street Curriculum for preschoolers. The center has partnered with Drake Head Start for slots between the infant, toddler and two year old rooms.

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This has allowed for the center to receive additional resources for the children and families. The center has a Universal Pre-K classroom and this is the only Universal Pre-K classroom in the state of Iowa that is bi-lingual. The center partners with the DSM public school district to provide this program.

The classrooms were all in ratio during this visit. There was good structure maintained in the rooms. The staff were responsive and nurturing. There is a variety of age/developmentally appropriate play centers/toys available in all rooms. The children were content and participating in group activities while this visit took place.

Nutrition Practices: There is an on-site kitchen and dedicated kitchen staff. This center participates with the CACFP food program and receives meals from the DSM public schools as well. The center offers breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack.

Playground: There are two enclosed playground areas, separated by ages; and enclosed with chain link fencing. There are shade structures and play equipment in good condition for both playground areas. There is also natural shade in the larger playground area.

Transportation: The center has two 13-passenger vans for transportation.

**2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program**

This center has attained IQ4K Level III (Iowa Quality for Kids (IQ4K®) is Iowa's new Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) for Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) licensed Child Care Centers and preschools, registered Child Development Homes and programs operating under the authority of an accredited school district or nonpublic school. IQ4K® provides five levels of quality (building blocks) that programs can achieve and continue to improve on)

This center provides a diverse program to the children and their families in the community. Teachers are professional and take pride in their classrooms with displays of children's activities.

The center continues to participate in the TEACH program..

The center continues to partner with several agencies in the community to offer resources and additional services to the children and families. The center offers parenting classes at the center through Iowa State Extension, which are currently being offered on-line, however have not taken place in awhile. The center has a strong partnership with Drake Head Start and United Way.

The center takes pride in embracing two cultures at one time. This is a very unique program and most of the staff are bi-lingual.

The center has a Facebook page and a Website.

The center offers hearing, vision and dental screenings for the children.

The center has OT and Speech therapy rooms located in the building so parents do not have to take time off of work to transport their child for these therapy sessions through Children's Resource.

The center has cameras in all of the classrooms and outside.

**3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard**

109.9(1)b: All files contain a pre-employment physical exam report completed within six months prior to hire and at least every three years. Physical exams shall be documented on form 470-5152, Child Care Provider Physical Examination Report.

109.10(13)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.

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109.11(4)b: Record of monthly inspections of outdoor recreation area and equipment shall be kept.

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

109.9(1)b: All files contain a pre-employment physical exam. A staff person was identified as needing to obtain and place on file an employment physical. The director would obtain the necessary documentation from the staff person.

109.10(13)b: Emergency...[emergency drills] completed monthly. There was missing documentation that the center completed all monthly fire and tornado drills. The director will set a reminder to complete and document all emergency drills.

109.11(4)b: Record of monthly inspections of outdoor recreation area and equipment shall be kept. Inspections of outdoor space need to be completed daily and documented monthly. The director indicated a reminder would be set to complete inspections.

**5. Special Notes/Recommendations**

The center completed radon testing 1/20/25, all levels below safe levels of 4.0.

The menu's reflect the center is following CACFP guidelines. The center is on the food program. The center has lunch served by the DSM public school district.

Targeted Assessment: Behavior Management
I discussed with the center director their oversight of behavior management related to helping childcare staff: 1) Understand expectations, 2) managing frustrations, 3) monitor performance. The director indicated that this center actively monitors for developmental milestones and is ablet to seek assistance from AEA and the Drake Headstart comes once a week to observe classrooms. Additionally, staff have training to address positive behavior redirections. The director and admin staff also offer strategies for positive behavior management for teachers, along with 1:1 Meeting if needed. The center also involves parents to strategize for solutions.

Date: 05/04/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Maggie Gibson, SWIV

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**.