Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Kids West-Hillside Elementary

Provider No.: 26539

Address: 713 8th ST, West Des Moines, IA, 50265

County: Polk

Director's Name: Ashley Kunz

On-Site Supervisor: Jennifer Bryant

Phone Number: 5156335018

E-Mail: hdkidswest@wdmcs.org
kunza@wdmcs.org

HHS Visit Date: 09/25/2026

Licensing Period: 11/01/2026 to 11/01/2028

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 09/16/2025

Comments: West Des Moines Fire Marshal. For licensing regulations, these inspections are due every three years. The City of West Des Moines typically does inspections more frequently.

Report Visit Type:

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

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

- [ ] 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 6:00 PM		
Tuesday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Wednesday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Thursday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Friday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	0	0	0	150	150
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

A licensing inspection was conducted on 9/25/26. The on-site supervisor was present throughout this inspection.

All areas of the program were observed. These areas observed consisted of classroom observations and activities, ratios, nutritional practices, health and safety practices, playground observation, field trip and transportation practices, and administrative review.

Kids West Hillside is a school-age program located within the Hillside Elementary School in West Des Moines. The center predominately uses the gym and cafeteria but they also use the media center at times as well as the outdoor playground area. The program was given permission to open by HHS (formerly known as DHS) on 8/22/14. Previous to this date, the center was under the Department of Education's supervision. There is a before and after school component as well as a full-day component during the summer and no school days. Before school hours are 6:30am - 8:55am and after school hours are 3:55pm - 6:00pm (with the exception of early out days). Full day programming is 6:30am - 6:00pm. Total child enrollment on the day of the inspection was 89 children.

The center is overseen by a Board and owned by the West Des Moines School District. Ashley Kunz is the director of this program and the seven other Kids West programs. Ashley has a Bachelor's degree and has past experience working in child care which includes being an area director for another child care center company. The on-site supervisor of this program is Jennifer Bryant. Jennifer meets the criteria for on-site supervisor based on her education and experience.

NUTRITION: The center serves children an AM snack, lunch, and a PM snack. All meals during the school year are provided by the West Des Moines School District Nutrition Department with the exception of no school days during the

school year when children are required to bring their own lunches. All food storage was sufficient. The menu is posted for the month and met CACFP requirements.

TRANSPORTATION/FIELD TRIPS: The center contracts with the school district for a driver and a bus. For all field trips, a first-aid kit and children's emergency contacts are taken along. Parents authorize field trip permission annually.

PLAYGROUND: The center utilizes the school playground. There is a blacktop area for basketball and other like games, a grassy area, a ball pit area, and a climbing structure area that has field turf for surfacing. The bolts on the bottom of one of the basketball poles need to be cut so that no more than two threads are showing. The school building provides some shade. Monthly playground inspections are being conducted.

During the inspection, children were divided up between the cafeteria and the gym. The children are divided up by age. In the cafeteria, the younger children were broken down into smaller groups at the tables and engaged in free-choice play. Some of the learning stations observed included different art/writing activities and some children were playing with dramatic play toys. In the gym, children were engaged in a large motor activity being facilitated by staff. Toys, tables, and other equipment are being cleaned and sanitized daily. Children quested gave specific answers as to where they relocate to for monthly fire and tornado drills.

For more challenging child behaviors, the Kids West centers have a behavioral specialist on staff to assist with these more challenging situations. The center staff are also taught to communicate with each other and work together. Communication is stressed between staff, staff and children, and staff and parents. Behavioral plans are created as needed and behaviors (progress or lack of progress) documented.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

There is a secure entrance into the school during programing hours. There are also security cameras outside.

A nutritionist reviews all meal items. The West Des Moines School District provides all meals to children (AM snack, PM snack, lunches) throughout most of the year.

Staff use walkie-talkies to communicate throughout different areas used by the center.

The center has a good working relationship with the school.

A staff person sits at a "communication desk" by the main parent board to greet parents and children and to ensure children are signed into/out of the center.

Typically, children get three credible food items for snack when only two are required to be served.

Staff pictures are posted by the main parent board.

The areas/rooms the center uses are nicely set up so that children can more easily flow from one area to the next.

There are team lead meetings every week. The director of the Kids West programs also meets quarterly with other directors of before/after school programs in the western suburbs. This center has weekly staff meetings.

Staff reportedly work well together and there is a real sense of "team". There are a lot of tenured staff at this location.

Enrollment remains steady.

The Kids West programs have a behavioral specialist who rotate between the eight programs to assist with challenging behaviors as needed.

Within the past year, a new playground climbing structure and field turf have been installed.

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3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

109.12(1): Program structure that uses developmentally appropriate practices and written program of activities planned to the developmental needs of children served. Program complements but does not duplicate school curriculum. Schedule of program is posted in a place visible to parents.
The full-day schedule was not posted on the day of the inspection.

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

The full-day schedule should be posted for when their is programming on No School days/summer.

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

The center is exempt from environmental testing as they serve school-age children only and in a school building.

I-Power was discussed at the visit. It appears all staff have I - Power profiles and training certificates are being uploaded. It was noted that two staff have completed the online portion of renewing CPR/First-Aid, but still need to do the skills test. This is scheduled.

The CACFP smart phone app was shared at the inspection.

The director and/or on-site supervisor will need to again (annually) reach out to their emergency relocation places to ensure these are still viable options.

On the playground, one basketball stand/pole still needs to have a few bolts cut/capped so that no more than two threads are exposed.

A new, full, two-year license is recommended.

Date: 09/27/2026

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HHS Licensing Consultant: Nate Knepper

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**.