



Health and
Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Project Youth

Provider No.: 51498

Address: 2707 Discovery Dr, Rock Valley, IA, 51247

County: Sioux

Director's Name: Julia Back

On-Site Supervisor: Jill Meinerts

Phone Number: 7124516939

E-Mail: projectyouth@premieronline.net

HHS Visit Date: 06/10/2026

Licensing Period: 07/01/2025 to 01/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 10/03/2024

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

- ☐ PTO
- ☒ Licensing Visit
- ☐ Drop In
- ☐ Administrative Change

License Type:

- ☒ Full
- ☐ Provisional

Quality initiative:

- ☒ Accreditation
- Comments: Level 1 IQ4K

Program Duration:

- ☒ Year-Round
- ☐ School Year
- ☐ Summer Only



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HOURS:	<u>Year-round</u>	<u>School-Year</u>	<u>Summer Only</u>
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
- ☒ School Age
- ☐ All Ages

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	54	44	57	28	183
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

I completed an unannounced visit at Project Youth in Rock Valley, Iowa, on 06/10/2026. I met with the program director, Julia Back, who has several years of experience in the childcare field. Project Youth is located on the east side of town and includes a Head Start classroom; the Head Start program operates under its own separate license.

The center operates Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and serves children from infancy through school age. The facility includes eight classrooms: infant (0–6 months), 6 months–1 year, 1-year-old room, 2-year-old room, 2/3-year-old room, 3-year-old room, 4/5-year-old room, and a school-age room. The program has 143 children enrolled, with 94 children present at the time of the visit.

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

Each classroom is bright, with a variety of visual aids displayed on the walls. The program uses a theme-based curriculum and incorporates hands-on, child-led activities to support engagement and development. This approach allows children to explore materials at their own pace, build independence, and develop critical thinking skills. Children's artwork is displayed throughout the building, reflecting ongoing creative opportunities. The arrangement of furniture and learning centers in each room supports a positive and organized flow. Centers observed included dramatic play, sensory materials, and toys that promote imagination and exploration. I also observed consistently positive interactions between staff and children throughout the center. Staff demonstrated a strong understanding of the individual needs and personalities of the children in their care. They greeted children by name, checked in with them as they moved between activities, and offered reassurance



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and guidance when needed. Staff engaged children in meaningful conversations, asked open-ended questions to extend learning, and encouraged children to share their ideas. During activities, staff participated alongside the children, modeling skills, supporting problem-solving, and fostering cooperative play. Their involvement appeared to create a warm, welcoming environment where children seemed comfortable, supported, and engaged.

One of the art projects displayed focused on The Very Hungry Caterpillar, with children creating artwork inspired by the story. This activity supports key developmental areas, including early literacy, fine-motor skills, creativity, and the ability to make connections between stories and real-world concepts.

I also observed the center's playground areas. The outdoor space is divided into separate age-appropriate areas to support safe play. The playground surfaces consist of rubber mulch and turf; the rubber mulch is bonded together, creating a stable and cushioned surface. Multiple pieces of playground equipment were present and observed to be in good repair. Children were outside during my visit, and staff were actively engaged with them, offering supervision, participating in activities, and encouraging positive peer interactions. Both playgrounds include shade structures, and there is additional natural shade available. A riding track surrounds the playground area, providing space for riding toys and gross-motor play. Monthly playground inspections have been completed and documented.

The center has an effective system in place for managing emergency contact information, with updated contact details stored in each first aid bag for quick access during emergencies. The center follows proper guidelines for administering medication. Tables are sanitized prior to children eating, and monthly tornado and fire drills are documented. The annual heating inspection has been completed, and radon testing results were within normal levels. All program areas were observed to be clean, well-maintained, and organized, with appropriate health and safety policies and procedures in place. Vehicle maintenance done regularly.

The kitchen is designed as a commercial kitchen and was clean and well-organized at the time of the visit. Breakfast, snacks, and lunch are prepared onsite. The program participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and follows all required guidelines. Renewing their IQ4K level indicates that the center remains committed to continuous quality improvement, adheres to higher standards, and is able to access additional supports and resources.

The center is clean, well-organized, and thoughtfully arranged. Classrooms and common areas are free of clutter, materials are neatly stored, and learning spaces are set up in a way that supports smooth transitions and safe movement throughout the day. Overall, the environment reflects consistent upkeep and attention to detail.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

The center operates a van and provides transportation to and from school during the school year, helping ensure children experience a smooth transition between school and childcare. This service supports continuity of care and offers families added convenience and reliability. For many families, transportation helps reduce scheduling challenges, supports consistent school attendance, and provides peace of mind knowing their child is safely transported by familiar staff.

The center has very detailed cleaning schedules in place, which provide clear expectations for staff and help ensure that all areas of the facility are kept sanitary and well-maintained. These schedules support consistency, promote good hygiene practices, and help create a healthy environment for children and staff.

The center is actively involved in community activities and, on the day of my visit, staff and children were preparing for a trip to the local pool. These types of outings help children stay connected to their community, support social development, and offer families reassurance that their children are experiencing a variety of enriching opportunities beyond the classroom.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard



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109.7(2): Center directors and all staff have the required contact hours of training. Please ensure all staff members are current with their professional development.

109.9(2)i: Preschool (for children five years and younger not enrolled in school): Physical exam report submitted within 30 days of admission, was obtained no more than 12 months prior to admission, is signed by a licensed MD, DO, Chiropractor, PA, or ARNP, and contains health history; present health status including allergies, medications, and acute/chronic conditions; and recommendations for continued care if necessary.

109.11(4)b: Record of monthly inspections of outdoor recreation area and equipment shall be kept. Ensure that regular inspections are completed for each playground.

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

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

Targeted Assessment: Behavior Management

I discussed with Ms. Back regarding her oversight of behavior management related to helping childcare staff: 1) Understand expectations, 2) managing frustrations, 3) monitor performance.

The center uses the Five Protective Factors framework to guide its approach to behavior and discipline. This model emphasizes preventing challenging behaviors by building supportive relationships and teaching children self-regulation skills. Staff use positive guidance strategies such as offering choices, modeling calm problem-solving, helping children identify their feelings, and redirecting them to appropriate activities. These methods encourage children to develop independence, learn appropriate social behaviors, and build confidence in managing their emotions. Ms. Back reports that she has a good rapport with her staff who can easily access her for assistance. They also are comfortable letting other staff know if they need a break. The center has cameras to assist monitoring appropriate childcare. I also discussed with staff who confirm that they feel comfortable reaching out for help.

Program will email consultant by 08/01/26 confirming that items that fall below standards has been corrected.

A full license is recommended at this time.

At least one visit will be made to the center during the next year.

Date: 06/12/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Leann Steinhauer



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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>.