Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Mahaska County Head Start

Provider No.: 25019

Address: 1521 Green Street, Oskaloosa, IA, 52577

County: Mahaska

Director's Name: Elizabeth Fairchild

On-Site Supervisor: Ranae Banicky and Angela Wilson

Phone Number: 6416767700

E-Mail: lfairchild@sieda.org

HHS Visit Date: 03/17/2026

Licensing Period: 10/01/2025 to 10/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 11/15/2025

Comments: due annually, performed by Mark Neff Oskaloosa Fire Department and SFM Curt Seddon

Report Visit Type:

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

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

Quality Rating: 3

- [ ] 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			52		52
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

Mahaska County Head Start is located in a newly constructed building in Oskaloosa. The center occupies three classrooms in the building which also houses several classrooms of SWPP, and several rooms occupied by the Mahaska County YMCA Childcare (an HHS licensed program). The center is owned and operated by Southeast Iowa Economic Development Association (SIEDA) and provides three Head Start classes to preschool age children. This program was formerly located across town in the Mahaska Preschool Partnership building. The program director is Elizabeth Fairchild. Ms. Fairchild directs several other Head Start programs for SIEDA in southeast Iowa. Ms. Fairchild has been Director of this program for 9 years and is housed in the main SIEDA office in Ottumwa. The program currently has two On Site Supervisors. Ranae Banicky is OSS over three sites and travels between them. The other On Site Supervisor is Angela Wilson. She has been employed with SIEDA since 2009. She was appointed two years ago as she is present daily.

On 3/17/26 I made an unannounced licensing visit to Mahaska County Head Start and met with OSS Ranae Banicky (2025) and other teachers. Angela Wilson is also qualified as OSS and present daily. She has been employed with Head Start since 2009. All program areas were observed on this date. This 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 summer consisted of observation of the rooms, outdoor play area and common areas.

Center Nutrition Practices Observed:

Meals are prepared by YMCA kitchen staff in the building in a commercial kitchen. The children eat in a newly constructed cafeteria area. The kitchen area is across the hall from the cafeteria and contains newer equipment, sufficient

storage for center food, and sufficient dish washing capacity to accommodate a program of this size. Posted menus indicate that minimum nutritional requirements are being met. The program is participating in the CACFP program. The center has a Nutrition Assistant as well. If children have food allergies the nutrition aide and cook and all staff supervising the child is aware. The teachers agreed to ensure children with special dietary needs have completed Diet Modification forms for food sensitivities.

Center Health and Safety:

The center administers prescription and non-prescription medication in accordance with licensing regulations, physician directions, and parental consent. The center currently has appropriate documentation for medication or children with allergies. We reviewed compliance with regulations regarding staff and child hand washing, storage and maintenance of a first aid kit, emergency plans and drills for fire and tornado, environmental testing and the maintenance of any necessary detection equipment, and general regulations regarding safety and sanitation policies and procedures. Allergy action plans should be posted in each room so that staff know how to respond to an emergency.

Carbon monoxide detectors should be present. Radon testing results should be under a level of 4 pCi/L. Updated testing is due every 5 years. The program is now exempt from the possibility of chipping of lead based paint since it was constructed after 1978. Ventilation is poor as reported by staff. They are not able to open windows.

The square footage of the classrooms indicates 24 or 25 children may be in each room. However, Head Start is setting their own capacity at 50 children which is best practice and duly noted. The program is in compliance with rule stating there must be one restroom for every 15 children. All restrooms must have ventilation.

Staff have a hard time attempting to maintain a consistent temperature in the rooms. HVAC work is currently being done in the building.

The program is secured by a locked door. Parents must ring a door bell and be buzzed in.

Director Elizabeth Fairchild and I had contact on 10/17/2019 regarding general ratio and supervision issues and how to best achieve these. Head Start is continuously working with staff regarding active and close supervision. Staff should know name and number of children assigned to them at all times and maintain direct supervision throughout the program day. The program is now serving three year old children in the new building. SWVPP is provided for 4 year old children by the school and the program has shared classrooms. At times ratio cannot be followed due to not having a Family Service Worker or floater in the building to give staff breaks.

Staff indicated they are sending incident reports home each day to parents, so parents are aware of behaviors. The incident reports are being signed by parents. This was discussed at length last year. Incident reporting has improved this past two years. Staff reported they a new floating teachers assistant is now available which makes managing child behaviors more manageable.

The program has access to a gross motor area down the hall from the classrooms. The area has attached restrooms.

The program has approximately 6 employees. All employees are over 18 years of age.

Center Playground:

The center has a new fenced outdoor play area immediately beside the center. Surfacing beneath the equipment is adequate. The area features commercial climbing equipment. Shade is provided by the building and shade structures. The Child Care Weather Watch is utilized to assess whether outdoor play is appropriate due to questionable weather conditions. Emergency medication, emergency contacts and a first aid kit are taken outdoors with the children. The kits are inaccessible to children.

The program should perform monthly outdoor play area inspections. Children must have at least 75 square feet of gross motor space both indoors and outdoors. This rule must be followed when children are in the gross motor room down the hall.

Center Transportation Arrangements/Field Trips:

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SIEDA contracts with 1015 a local transportation service. Walking field trips and any other field trips may be taken with parents signed authorizations updated annually. Groups may take walks around campus which is not considered a field trip. Emergency contacts, emergency medication and a first aid kit are taken on any trips/walks.

Center Administrative Records:

Child misbehavior is addressed by redirection, positive reinforcement of appropriate behavior. The center is in compliance with regulations regarding required notices and postings and required written policies provided to parents in the form of a parent handbook. Staff and child records are examined annually.

Katie Thompson, Head Start Administrative Assistant, Ottumwa provided HHS with staff records. She does an excellent job of record keeping and provides HHS with staff requirements. She provided me with staff records on 3/18/2026. Staff and child records are complete and well organized. Staff physicals are up to date. Mandatory Reporter training, SING checks, fingerprint checks (4 years) and professional development hours were reviewed. Emergency Preparedness training is due annually. A new plan was written for the new location.

Child files are stored in Child Plus. The family service worker ensures each file contains updated physicals and immunizations. The program is working with parents to ensure updated physicals are acquired.

All required postings including Mandatory Reporter information, HHS License and HHS Licensing Consultant Information. No Smoking signage was also present. Communicable diseases are posted as they arise.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

The program is working in cooperation with other area agencies.

The program fills a need in the community.

Program staff work well with school and childcare personnel also in the building.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

1. 109.11(4)b: Record of monthly inspections of outdoor recreation area and equipment shall be kept. The staff and OSS agreed to maintain playground inspections so they can document possible concerns, such as the man hole cover in the outdoor play area. It appears to be stable.

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

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

HHS encourages you to contact your local nurse consultant. 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. Please visit the following website regarding health forms and postings and other services offered by IDPH Child Care Nurse Consultants: http://idph.iowa.gov/hcci/consultants This program has access to Consultant Mary Mickulecky. CCNC M reported the

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following services performed in early 2025:
Visits- 4
Child record review – 20 files.
Special care needs review- all children files.
TA- special care needs care plans- All of them
Diet modification education
Diabetes education
Medication authorization education –

The program has a new CCNC, Kelsey Stookesberry. CCNC will conduct a health and safety assessment April 3rd.

HHS encourages you to contact Child Care Resource and Referral Consultant Karen Lauer. They offer centers assistance with meeting the DHS regulations, QRS, infant/toddler concerns, room arrangement and environment, developmental concerns, Best Practice information, CDA assistance, or any questions or concerns you may have. The center is aware they may access CCNC and CCR&R Consultant on a consistent basis. Karen Lauer is the consultant for this program. She has provided consultation, observation and forms in the past. Consultant Lauer reported the following services rendered 2024/2025:
• Mahaska Head Start TA's: 29 (Topics: Refer Support to other Program, Business Policies & Practices, Drop off, IQ4K, Emergency Preparedness, and Training Consultation)
• Mahaska Head Start Visits: 2 (Topics: IQ4K and Training Consultation)

This year: TA: 6 (Topics – IQ4K, Growing Iowa, Refer/Support to Other Programs)

Based upon this review, it is recommended that this center remain in Full licensing status. The center is directed to correct any violations in a timely manner, then continue to monitor day to day practice and adjust accordingly to continue to ensure licensing rule is met consistently. It is important to note, all HHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period.

Date: 03/20/2026

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**.