Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Unity Head Start

Provider No.: 30155

Address: 1901 Unity Ave, Sioux City, IA, 51105

County: Woodbury

Director's Name: Rachel Ostermyer

On-Site Supervisor: Alicia Ivory

Phone Number: 7122247389

E-Mail: rostermyer@caasiouxland.org, cbeatty@caasiouxland.org

HHS Visit Date: 04/10/2026

Licensing Period: 05/01/2026 to 04/01/2028

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 07/25/2025

Comments:

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		8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	
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		8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	

Program Population Served:

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	0	0	20	0	20
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

I completed an unannounced visit at the UnityPoint Head Start Program located within Unity Elementary School. Upon arrival, I was greeted by Onsite Supervisor Alicia Ivory. Ms. Ivory holds an associate's degree in early childhood education, a substitute teaching license, and brings many years of experience working with young children. The program participates in the Iowa Preschool Initiative and operates Monday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and on Fridays from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Families drop off and pick up children at a designated, secured entrance separate from the rest of the school. The program serves children ages 4–5 years old.

Prior to entering the classroom, I observed all required postings located near the program's designated entrance. The program currently has 18 children enrolled, with 12 present at the time of the visit.

Throughout my walkthrough, I observed all key areas of the center, including classrooms, daily activities, nutrition practices, health and safety procedures, the playground, and documentation for administrative review.

Staff were warm and engaging with children. They frequently offered positive reinforcement and gentle redirection consistent with PBIS practices. PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) is a framework that teaches and encourages positive behavior through consistent expectations, modeling, and support. Staff demonstrated this by acknowledging positive choices, helping children navigate social interactions, and maintaining a calm and predictable environment.

The program utilizes the HighScope Curriculum Gold, which emphasizes active, hands-on learning. In HighScope, children learn by doing—exploring materials, making choices, and engaging in purposeful play. Teachers act as facilitators,

supporting children's thinking, extending conversations, and guiding learning through consistent routines and intentional interactions. This curriculum supports school readiness in a developmentally appropriate way.

Classrooms included visual aids pairing pictures with printed words. These supports help children develop early literacy skills by allowing them to connect images with written language, while also helping non-readers follow routines, choose activities, and navigate the environment more independently.

The kitchen and food service areas were clean and well maintained. The refrigerator temperature was appropriate, and food was stored safely. The program follows CACFP nutrition guidelines, and menus were posted. All meals are provided through Sioux City Schools at no cost to students. Staff sat with children during meals, modeling appropriate table manners and engaging in positive conversation.

Medication was stored securely in a locked box out of children's reach. The first aid kit was equipped to treat minor injuries. Monthly fire and tornado drills were completed and documented. Sanitization procedures were observed to be appropriate, and the center utilizes a functioning carbon monoxide detector. All program areas were clean, organized, and well maintained. Radon testing is complete as well as the annual fuel burning inspection.

During my visit, I observed children lining up for recess. Certain children had assigned classroom "jobs" for the day, including helping transport items outside. A wagon was used to bring toys and the first aid kit to the playground. I also observed a smooth transition when children returned indoors. The group was divided into two smaller groups, and each child took turns rolling a dice. The number rolled determined a short movement activity the child completed, with peers counting together. The child then proceeded to wash hands. This routine effectively reinforces handwashing while incorporating movement, counting skills, and positive engagement.

Overall, the UnityPoint Head Start Program demonstrated a warm, organized, and developmentally supportive environment. Staff were knowledgeable, attentive, and consistently responsive to children's needs. The program appears well maintained and committed to following licensing standards and best practices in early childhood education.

The goal for this program is to continue to increase their IQ4K level.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

The program is certified at IQ4K Level 4, which indicates it has met high standards set by Iowa's Quality Rating and Improvement System. Level 4 programs go beyond basic licensing requirements and demonstrate strong quality in areas such as:
• Staff training and professional development
• Use of evidence-based curriculum and assessment
• Safe and well-maintained learning environments
• Strong family engagement practices
• High-quality nutrition and physical activity standards
• Consistent health, safety, and administrative procedures
Earning Level 4 reflects a significant commitment to continuous improvement and high-quality early childhood education.

I observed positive and supportive interactions between staff members and children. Staff consistently engaged with children at their developmental level, using warm communication, encouragement, and age-appropriate guidance.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

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

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5. Special Notes/Recommendations

Targeted Assessment: Behavior Management

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

Ms. Ivory demonstrated a strong understanding of her staff's needs and the challenges that can arise in the classroom. Early in the school year, the team intentionally divides children into smaller groups to help ensure that children with behavioral concerns are placed in different groups. Staff rotate groups weekly to provide a fresh perspective and maintain consistency. The two staff members in this classroom have worked together for three years and exhibit open communication and strong teamwork. They are attentive to one another's stress indicators and step in seamlessly to support each other as needed

A full license is recommended at this time.

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

Date: 04/10/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Leann Steinhauer

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**.