Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Le Mars Head Start & Early Head Start

Provider No.: 30226

Address: 180 10th St, Le Mars, IA, 51031

County: Plymouth

Director's Name: Kendra Rensik

On-Site Supervisor: Shelly Ostermeyer

Phone Number: 7125469658

E-Mail: lm1hs@midsioux.org

HHS Visit Date: 04/21/2026

Licensing Period: 05/01/2025 to 05/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 04/08/2026

Comments:

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	8:00 AM to 3:00 PM		
Tuesday	8:00 AM to 3:00 PM		
Wednesday	8:00 AM to 3:00 PM		
Thursday	8:00 AM to 3:00 PM		
Friday	8:00 AM to 1:30 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		16	60		76
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

I completed an unannounced visit to the Le Mars Head Start and Early Head Start Program on 04/21/26. I spoke with Shelly Ostermeyer, the onsite supervisor. Ms. Ostermeyer has 28 years of experience at the center and holds a two-year associate degree. Each classroom has its own lead teacher, and staff are encouraged to take an active role in the development of programming. Kendra Rensink remains the director and is in this role for several Head Start Programs.

Le Mars Head Start and Early Head Start operates five separate classrooms located in Weidler Hall in Le Mars. The two 4-year-old classrooms operate from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Fridays. The 3-year-old classroom operates on the same schedule. The Early Head Start program, serving children ages 18 to 36 months, consists of two classrooms that operate year-round from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Fridays.

All rooms are located on one floor and share a large kitchen where all meals are prepared. Two fenced-in playgrounds are located close to the building, one designated for Early Head Start and the other for children ages 3–5. There are 65 children enrolled at this site, with 63 present at the time of my visit.

The center utilizes the Creative Curriculum and High Scope Curriculum. These are research-based early childhood curricula that support child-led exploration, hands-on learning, and consistent daily routines. Both curricula emphasize social-emotional development, language and literacy, and intentional teacher-child interactions. Daily schedules were posted in the classrooms. Displays throughout the rooms included colors, shapes, the five senses, picture schedules, job charts, children's artwork, and the alphabet. Classroom arrangement supported learning with sensory centers, including areas for exploring bugs and a shadow box display of butterflies. Staff used positive "I-statements" such as "I can do this," modeling

confidence and encouraging children's independence.

I observed a transition period as children returned from the playground. All children washed their hands upon entering the classroom, and the process was smooth and well-managed. Teachers incorporated spelling of names and simple songs to support learning during transitions.

The environment had a noticeably positive feel. This was demonstrated through warm interactions between staff and children, child-centered displays, and well-organized routines. Such an atmosphere supports children's emotional security, engagement, and willingness to explore and learn. I also observed children playing outside on the playground. Staff were actively engaged with the children during outdoor play, offering encouragement, participating in activities, and closely supervising to ensure safety. Their positive interactions supported social development, cooperative play, and children's confidence in exploring the outdoor environment.

All staff are trained in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). PBIS is a research-based framework that teaches and reinforces positive behavior through clear expectations, consistent routines, and supportive adult-child interactions. Staff use proactive strategies to prevent challenging behaviors and to help children learn social-emotional skills in a developmentally appropriate way. This approach promotes a calm, predictable environment where children feel secure, understand what is expected of them, and are able to build strong relationships with adults and peers. PBIS training also supports consistency across classrooms, which helps children transition smoothly and benefit from a unified teaching approach.

The center follows CACFP guidelines, and good food-storage practices were observed. The kitchen was clean and well organized. Children brush their teeth after meals. A sufficient first-aid kit was available for treating minor injuries. Fire and tornado drills are documented monthly. The annual heating inspection has been completed. Radon testing has been completed, and results are within normal limits. Sanitary procedures throughout the site were observed to be appropriate. The center has a functioning carbon monoxide detector. All program areas were clean, well maintained, and supported by strong health and safety policies and procedures.

The program's goal is to continue to increase IQ4K certification level. Iowa Quality for Kids (IQ4K®) is Iowa's voluntary Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) for licensed childcare centers, preschools, and registered child development homes. The system uses a five-level structure to guide continuous quality improvement and reward programs for meeting increasing benchmarks across key domains such as education, environment, safety, health, and staff development.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

Employees at this center have extensive experience with the program, with most staff members having more than ten years of service. This level of experience positively impacts the quality of care, as staff are deeply familiar with program expectations, child-development practices, and effective classroom management. Their long-term commitment supports strong relationships with children and families, consistency in routines, and a stable learning environment.

The program maintains a strong connection with the local schools. This collaboration supports smooth transitions for children entering preschool and kindergarten, ensures continuity in developmental expectations, and allows staff to share information and resources that benefit children and families. These partnerships help promote consistency in learning approaches and strengthen the support network available to children as they move from early childhood settings into the school system.

Staff complete home visits to help build strong, positive relationships between the home and the school environment. These visits allow staff to better understand each child's background, strengths, and needs, while giving families an opportunity to share concerns, ask questions, and actively participate in their child's learning.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

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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 several staff members their oversight of behavior management related to helping childcare staff: 1) Understand expectations, 2) managing frustrations, 3) monitor performance.

The staff report having strong working relationships with one another and note that, having worked together for many years, they are able to recognize each other's frustrations and provide support when needed. They follow PBIS guidance and are able to identify when they themselves—or another staff member—are becoming frustrated, allowing them to respond calmly and maintain a positive environment for children. Staff also receive assistance from Mid-Sioux personnel in developing positive supports and strengthening classroom practices. An open-door policy allows staff to share concerns, offer ideas, and communicate freely. Overall, they present as a cohesive team that enjoys their work, which contributes to a stable, supportive, and child-centered environment.

A full license is recommended at this time.

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

Date: 04/22/2026

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**.