Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Theodore's Academy Preschool and Childcare

Provider No.: 50989

Address: 3680 Glen Ellen Rd, Sioux City, IA, 51106

County: Woodbury

Director's Name: Paxi Cutler

On-Site Supervisor: Jada Geeseman

Phone Number: 7125604056

E-Mail: theodoresacademy@gmail.com

HHS Visit Date: 06/17/2026

Licensing Period: 07/01/2026 to 07/01/2028

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 04/16/2026

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

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday	7:00 AM to 5:30 PM		
Tuesday	7:00 AM to 5:30 PM		
Wednesday	7:00 AM to 5:30 PM		
Thursday	7:00 AM to 5:30 PM		
Friday	7:00 AM to 5:30 PM		
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	14	9	39		62
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

On 06/17/2026, I completed an unannounced visit to the center. Upon arrival, I was able to meet with Director Paxi Cutler. Paxi holds an elementary education degree and has worked in the early childhood field for several years. She has also completed the Director's Administrative Training through Hawkeye Community College.

The program provides childcare services for children ages 6 weeks through 6 years. Once a child completes kindergarten, they transition out of the program. The center operates Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The facility includes five classrooms: an infant room, a 1-year-old room, two 2-year-old rooms, a 3-year-old room, and a combined 3–6-year preschool classroom. The program currently has 40 children enrolled. At the time of my visit, 21 children were present.

All areas of the program were observed during the visit. Observations included classroom environments and activities, nutritional practices, health and safety procedures, playground supervision, field trip and transportation practices, and an administrative review.

There are large windows and interior glass walls throughout the center, allowing staff and parents to easily view activities within each room. These features also provide abundant natural light. The center includes a variety of visual aids, such as children's artwork, alphabet displays, colors, and numbers, all of which support learning and create an engaging environment. The overall atmosphere is positive. Staff encourage children to develop problem-solving skills by guiding them through questions or concerns as they arise. Their goal is to support the development of critical thinking skills in the children they care for. The use of natural light, visual aids, and child-created artwork aligns well with their curriculum, High Scope. The High Scope Curriculum is a research-based early childhood approach that emphasizes active learning, where children learn through hands-on experiences with people, materials, and their environment. A key component of High Scope

is the daily "plan-do-review" process, which encourages children to make choices, carry out their plans, and reflect on their activities with support from staff. This approach promotes independence, problem-solving, and social-emotional development. High Scope also provides structured guidance for teachers on classroom organization, adult-child interactions, and ongoing observation and assessment, helping staff create consistent routines and developmentally appropriate learning experiences. As a result, the curriculum supports strong cognitive, language, and social-emotional outcomes for children. By displaying letters, numbers, colors, and children's work, the center supports early literacy, cognitive development, and a sense of belonging. Additionally, the staff's focus on helping children develop problem-solving and thinking skills is consistent with The High Scope Curriculum's goal of fostering independence, critical thinking, and social-emotional development. These practices support children in becoming active learners who can explore, ask questions, and make decisions within their environment. The classrooms are arranged with learning centers that encourage play, support developmental growth, and promote the development of social-emotional skills.

The infant room was clean, well-organized, and developmentally appropriate. I observed staff transitioning children through diaper changes and meal preparation. Staff demonstrated appropriate diapering procedures and engaged with the infants at their level, providing nurturing interaction and support throughout the routines.

Sinks are located within the classrooms to support proper handwashing practices. The bathrooms were observed to be clean and equipped with visual handwashing reminders. Radon testing has been completed, and results were within the normal range. All appliances, including the water heater and furnace, are electric. Emergency fire and tornado drills were properly logged. The center's handbooks contain all required policies. While the program does not qualify for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), they follow CACFP meal pattern requirements. Meals are provided by the Sioux City Community School District.

The center continues to train staff in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), which promotes consistent, positive guidance strategies and supports children's social-emotional development. Staff are also encouraged to obtain their Child Development Associate (CDA) credential to strengthen their knowledge of developmentally appropriate practices. In addition, the lead teachers have completed ECERS and ITERS training, which provides them with the skills to assess and enhance classroom environments for both preschool and infant/toddler age groups.

The playground consists of a large grassy area where children can run and play, and large umbrellas are available to provide shade. The center has also added a separate toddler playground to better meet developmental needs. This summer, the program is adding a cement play area to expand outdoor learning opportunities. In addition, the center maintains garden boxes that the children help plant and care for.

Goals for the program include increasing enrollment and they attempting to obtain Level IQ4K certification.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

The center has achieved Level?3 in the Iowa Quality for Kids (IQ4K) system, demonstrating its commitment to continuous quality improvement. At this level, programs meet higher standards in staff training, classroom environments, family engagement, and nutrition and physical activity practices. Reaching Level?3 shows the center is actively strengthening professional development, promoting culturally responsive practices, and using recognized assessment tools to enhance learning environments. These efforts benefit children by supporting safe, developmentally appropriate classrooms, consistent teaching practices, and positive interactions that foster social-emotional and cognitive growth.

Several staff members have either completed or are in the process of completing their Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. The CDA provides early childhood educators with specialized training in child development, classroom practices, and health and safety standards. Having staff pursue or hold a CDA strengthens the quality of care by ensuring they understand developmentally appropriate practices, can create supportive learning environments, and are equipped to promote children's social-emotional and cognitive growth.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

109.9(2)d: All files contain sufficient information and authorization to allow the center to secure emergency medical and dental services at any time child is in center's care.

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

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

Targeted Assessment: Behavior Management

Paxi keeps regular contact throughout the day to ensure that her staff do not become frustrated. She indicates that her staff feel comfortable reaching out to other staff in the room for help, as well as to Paxi herself. The staff are trained in PBIS. There are also cameras in the daycare that allow Paxi to observe staff interactions with the children in their care.

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

A full license is recommended.

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

Date: 06/17/2026

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**.