Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: NEICAC-Cresco Head Start

Provider No.: 18224

Address: 1135 Canterbury, Cresco, IA, 52136

County: Howard

Director's Name: Sharon Burke

On-Site Supervisor: Carrie Kostohryz

Phone Number: 5635472459

E-Mail: sburke@neicac.org

HHS Visit Date: 09/10/2025

Licensing Period: 10/01/2024 to 10/01/2026

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 03/25/2024

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

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

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

- [ ] Accrediation

Program Duration:

- [X] Year-Round
- [ ] School Year
- [ ] Summer Only

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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

On 09/10/25 I made an unannounced off year licensing visit to NEICAC-Cresco Head Start. I met with Carrie Kostohryz, the lead teacher and on-site supervisor. She has a BA in elementary and early childhood education. Ms. Kostohryz started with Head Start in August 2013 and has been at the Cresco site since August 2018. Her co-teacher is Angie Kennedy. Ava Sons is a floater who joins the classroom each Friday. Sharon Burke is the director of the early childhood programs administered by Northeast Iowa Community Action Corporation. Her office is in the administration office in Decorah. Lisa Milder is the program manager. Amy Hershberger is the family worker.

NEICAC-Cresco Head Start is in the Cresco Early Childhood Center. It operates Monday through Friday from 7:45 am until 2:45 pm and serves preschool children. There are currently 9 children enrolled.

The Head Start Program operates out of one classroom. An inspection of the room was completed. The room was within ratio during the visit. Windows provide natural lighting. The room is decorated with pictures of the children, the children's art projects, and posters to assist the children with the learning process, such as the alphabet, shapes, colors and numbers. The children's birthdays were posted. There is an area for circle time.

The centers observed on the day of the licensing visit include library, Lego/blocks, table toys, games, puzzles, transportation, computer, art, dramatic play, listening, writing, math, science/discovery, woodworking, sensory table and music. Centers were arranged in a manner that allowed easy movement between activities, but it also allowed for clear supervision by staff members. Materials were in good condition. The materials are located at child level so they are easily accessible to the children.

There are two child-sized sinks in the classroom and one adult-sized sink in the room. Handwashing procedures were posted. There is a bathroom in the room with two toilets. Cots are used to nap.

The program uses a variety of resources to prepare lesson plans. They use Creative Curriculum and the GOLD assessment tool. They complete Brigance assessments and ASQ-SE assessments. They use Handwriting Without Tears, Second Step, Character Counts and Skill Streaming. Activities are planned around studies. They also participate in the Farm to Early Care and Education program. Each month they focus on a new food. Each week they focus on math, health, science, social studies, literacy, music and movement and nutrition. Parents are provided with a monthly newsletter to inform them of studies, activities and special dates. There is an Epson projector in the classroom.

Head Start uses the Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) program in their classroom. They teach a new PBIS topic/lesson each week in the classroom and information is sent home to parents so they can utilize the tools at home as well. The program is also using solution kits in the classroom. This provides children with choices to try and solve

problems on their own. Parents can sign up to use the Ready Rosie app which provides activities for the family to do at home. Head Start is also doing a Second Step lesson each day for the social/emotional health of the children each day. Head Start has family workers that go to homes to work with families and offer support and community resources.

There was a phone with emergency numbers in the office. You should also post the emergency numbers near the phone in the classroom. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and an evacuation diagram were posted near the main program door. A daily schedule was posted and a lesson plan was available for review.

The Head Start Program participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack are served. Breakfast and snack are provided by Head Start and lunch is contracted out to Howard-Winneshiek Community School and delivered to the classroom. Head Start staff members have access to a complete kitchen and are responsible for cleanup and dishwashing. There is a dishwasher in the classroom. Menus are posted. Allergies are confidentially posted. There is a small refrigerator in the room and a refrigerator in the staff break room and thermometers were present. Food items were stored according to NHSPS guidelines.

The program is using Oxivir Tb to sanitize toys and classroom materials and SaniDate is used to sanitize the food tables. Each product has a one-minute dwell time.

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. I reviewed documentation of monthly playground inspections. The radon test was completed in September 2024 and is good for five years. Results were within EPA guidelines. The building is geothermal and does not require a fuel burning inspection. There are no gas burning appliances. A carbon monoxide detector is not necessary, but there is some located in the hallways of the building. Outlets were protected. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 03/25/24.

The parent board is outside of the classroom. The mandatory reporter, childcare consultant and the handbook availability were posted. The license was conspicuously present. A no-smoking sign was posted at the entrance.

Head Start children share a fenced in outdoor play area with the childcare center. It is a large naturalistic play area. There is a hill that has two slides built into it. There is a large sandbox, a rock path and concrete path for riding toys, a stage for the children to perform on, a music center, balance beams, sensory center and a large shade shelter with benches. There are flower and vegetable gardens and trees provide shade.

The natural playground needs to be mowed and there are several thistles in different areas. Talk with who is responsible for the playground maintenance and have them remove the thistles and mow.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

Staff members have great teamwork. I briefly saw them in the classroom. Children were cleaning up centers. They then moved to the rug where they went over the day's schedule and lined up to go outside. Outside, the children were all enjoying playing in the large sandbox. It had rained the night before so the children could not play on the slides as there was mud at the bottom of them. Staff members encouraged the children to use their imaginations and talked with them about building sand castles. Staff members spoke with the children about using their words and good manners. They modeled good manners for the children and acknowledged when good manners were used. Staff members provided praise and displayed positive relationships with the children. The children enjoyed their time on the playground.

Ms. Kostohryz is going back to school to get a special education degree.

Ms. Kostohryz states the program adapts and adjusts to changes. This year they only have two teachers and they are not offering wrap around care because of lack of funding. They do have a floater that comes to the program on Fridays.

Ms. Kostohryz states the teachers are committed. When they do not have funds to buy things for the classroom, the teachers get things on their own to make sure the children do not go without.

Ms. Kostohryz states Head Start is very family oriented. They focus on meeting the needs and helping the entire family, such as helping with rent.

They still provide vision screenings, hearing screenings and a dental screening twice each year.

The program is in a secure building and there is a camera in the room.

Ms. Kostohryz states the corporate office is great to work with. They know the newest things in education and provide them with great training. They learn the best way to teach the children they serve.

Head Start uses the Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) program in their classroom. This allows teachers to involve the parents in the program. There are several visual cues in the classroom for PBIS.

The children who are four years old and older can ride the public school bus to school.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

N/A

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

N/A

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

A full license is issued for the remainder of the licensing period. All DHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period.

An administrative change is being made to change the hours of operation from 7:45 am until 2:45 pm. The program no longer offers wrap around care.

I met with Ms. Kostohryz and Ms. Kennedy following my observations. I did not note anything that needed corrected.

I asked them if they had any needs they wanted to discuss. They said the school system took away the transit transportation that would transport the children from the buses to the Head Start building. Due to not having the transit, Ms. Kennedy must wait at the bus stop every morning to get the children off various buses and walk them a good distance back to the Head Start building. The children must sit beside her until all the children are off the different buses. Ms. Kennedy and the children are outside from 7:40-8:05 am. The same thing occurs in the afternoon. Ms. Kennedy returns the children to the bus stop and is there with the children from 3:15-3:35 pm until the last child gets on a bus. The children must cross a street and will have to be subjected to weather conditions, including rain and winter conditions.

The program should contact their CCR&R representative to discuss Growing Iowa funds to possibly pay for the transit to transport the children to the Head Start building from the school bus stop.

Date: 09/11/2025

HHS Licensing Consultant: Becky Frost

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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**.