Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: St. Joseph The Worker Early Childhood
Provider No.: 19221

Address: 2105 St Joseph Street, Dubuque, IA, 52001

County: Dubuque

Director's Name: Nicole Dalsing
On-Site Supervisor:

Phone Number: 5635821246
E-Mail: ndalsing@holyfamilydbq.org

HHS Visit Date: 05/07/2026

Licensing Period: 08/01/2025 to 08/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 04/22/2026

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

- [ ] PTO
- [X] 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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HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday	6:30 AM to 5:30 PM		
Tuesday	6:30 AM to 5:30 PM		
Wednesday	6:30 AM to 5:30 PM		
Thursday	6:30 AM to 5:30 PM		
Friday	6:30 AM to 5:30 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	89	80	132	65	366
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

An unannounced off year visit was completed at this center on 5/7/26. The center director is Nicole Dalsing. Nicole was present at the time of the visit and accompanied the licensing consultant throughout the majority of the visit. Nicole is qualified with an associate's degree in early childhood education, current NAC certification through 5/2028, experience in child care since 2007 including previous center director experience for three years and assistant director experience for five years. Lis Ernst is the Program Director for the Holy Family early childhood programs, and she was also present and accompanied the licensing consultant through the majority of the visit. This early childhood program is part of a large network of child care facilities and schools operated by the Holy Family entity, a consortium of Catholic Churches in the Dubuque area. The enrollment is typically increased during the summer at this site because it is one of the sites that operates year round, thus, some children who attend other Holy Family sites during the school year may attend here during the summer. School-age children typically only attend at this site on non-school days. The center does participate in the Iowa Voluntary Preschool Grant program. The center director states the center uses the Creative Curriculum for preschool age children, infants use Frog Street curriculum, and for school age children the curriculum is theme based and is based off of the Leader In Me curriculum. The center reports enrollment of 137 children at the time of the visit.

This is a very large center occupying all three floors of what was once a Catholic school building. All program space was observed.

Two year old rooms, toddler rooms, younger infant rooms, three year old rooms, and four/five year old rooms, are all included on the "main" level of the center. Rooms have had restroom areas added adjacent to the rooms/shared between two rooms. There are also hallway restroom areas available. Diaper stations and hand washing sinks are located in the rooms that include diapering, and rooms do include at least one hand washing sink within the room. Some of the rooms that

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have not yet been remodeled do also include adjacent restroom areas.

There are four separate prek/preschool/child care rooms located on the lower (mid) level of the building used for four/five year old children. There are hand washing sinks located within each program room on this floor. Children have to travel to use the restroom area located on this floor. There are separate boys (two toilets, one urinal, one sink) and girls (two toilets, one sink) restroom areas located at the end of the hallway.

The lowest level of the center includes the school age room (room OD3/012), the cafeteria (school age), and the gymnasium (large motor space for various groups age two and older). There are restroom areas for girls and boys located in a hallway adjacent to the gym for the children to use on this floor. The cafeteria includes hand washing sinks located within the room. Restroom areas in the hallway "girls locker room" and "boys locker room" are also used.

The center participates in the CACFP and serves breakfast, morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack. Food is now prepared off site at one of the other Holy Family school locations and brought to this center. That kitchen is licensed by IDPH, and the license is current. Final preparation is completed in the remodeled and organized kitchen prep area of this building. The lower level full kitchen is no longer used by the center. Some children do bring their own lunch, and the center is reminded to be careful to inspect and supplement to meet CACFP requirements when necessary. Parents do have to pay extra for breakfast and lunch meals.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

The center has undergone significant remodeling of the building over the past several years with several additional rooms completed for this licensing visit. Program rooms are all large and bright with many windows on both the main and lower levels. Hallways are also decorated with the children's projects and crafts throughout the center. The staff at the center continue to work well together. Staff were again observed to be highly involved with the children in activities. The center's licensing documentation and staff and child files are organized.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

109.6(4)c: Center repeats Iowa record checks at a minimum of every two years or when aware of additional child abuse or criminal history that occurs.
1. _1_ staff file reviewed Iowa record check was due 10/2025 and not completed until 4/2026.
2. _2_ staff files reviewed did not have evidence that the national record check had been submitted prior to the staffs' involvement in child care as required.

109.9(2)i: Preschool (for children five years and younger not enrolled in school): Physical exam report submitted within 30 days of admission, was obtained no more than 12 months prior to admission, is signed by a licensed MD, DO, Chiropractor, PA, or ARNP, and contains health history; present health status including allergies, medications, and acute/chronic conditions; and recommendations for continued care if necessary.
1. _1_ child file reviewed did not have a current physical.

109.11(4)a: Center must have safe outdoor program area adjacent to the center, with sufficient square footage to accommodate at least 30 percent of the enrollment capacity at any one time at 75 spear feet per child. Outdoor space must:Be free from litter and unsafe materials and free from contamination by the drainage or ponding of sewage or storm water.Include safe play equipment and an area of shade.Include fencing to protect from bodies of water or vehicular traffic.
1. Storage box container near the school age portion of the playground is broken and needs to be removed/replaced.
2. Wooden sandbox frame is degraded and presents sharp hazards.
3. Wood chips are not satisfactory for depth throughout the required fall zone areas.

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

N/A

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

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Targeted Assessment: Behavior Management
I discussed with (director) their oversight of behavior management related to helping childcare staff: 1) Understand expectations, 2) managing frustrations, 3) monitor performance.
The center director provided the following responses:
1) I review behavior management expectations during onboarding, staff meetings, and individual coaching conversations. We discuss age-appropriate guidance, positive redirection, active supervision, and maintaining respectful interactions with children. Staff are encouraged to ask questions and seek support whenever they are unsure how to handle a situation.
2) I work with staff to recognize signs of stress and frustration before they escalate. If I see someone escalating, I will address it on the spot, but in a way it does not make the teacher embarrassed. We discuss different strategies such as stepping away when appropriate, seeking assistance from another staff member, taking a moment to regroup, and maintaining a calm, professional response with children. I also will teach them different ways to interact with the children like switching up their wording so that the children will respond better and they will be less frustrated. I encourage open communication so staff feel comfortable asking for support when needed and never feel ashamed.
3) I monitor these expectations through classroom observations, walkthroughs, couple minute pop ins throughout the day, staff coaching, and ongoing communication with teachers. Concerns are addressed immediately and are followed up with constant check-ins.

The center was reminded of allowable age combinations. Two year old children may not be combined with four year old children, and three year old children may not be combined with school age children unless under the very specific rule 109.8(2)h for the very beginning and/or end of the day with only the number of children and staff present at the center as defined by the rule. The center will need to ensure compliance.

The administrative change aspect of this report reflects the updated configuration of the center and with additional remodeling of rooms completed. Individual room capacities are as follows:

Main level:
Room 201 (three through five) = 29 children
Room 202 (infants, CRIBS) = 15 children
Room 204 (infants, CRIBS) = 15 children
Room 206 (toddlers) = 15 children (NO CRIBS)
Room 208 (twos/threes) = 19 children
Room 210 (twos/threes) = 19 children
Room 212 (twos/threes) = 19 children
Room 214 (threes/fours) = 19 children
Room 209 (toddler) = 15 children (NO CRIBS)
Room 207 (twos/threes) = 23 children
Room 205 (toddler) = 15 children (NO CRIBS)
Room 203 (infants, cribs) = 14 children
Room 200 (prek) = 20 children

Mid level:
room 118/1D2 (fours/fives) = 16 children
room 116/1D1 (fours/fives) = 16 children
room 117/1B1 (fours/fives) = 16 children
room 115/1B2 (fours/fives) = 16 children

Lowest Level:
Room 012/OD3 (school age) = 35 children
Cafeteria (school age) = 30

1. Child and staff file tracking for compliance is needed.
2. Emergency plan postings are needed at all doors from room 117/1B1.
3. Ensure the start times of meals and snacks show on the posted schedules.

The center will continue with a full license. Please address the violation(s) and/or concern(s) noted in the report so that corrections are obvious and ensure that items remain in compliance. This report does not require a written response. Thank you.

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Date: 06/09/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Heidi Hungate

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**.