Iowa Department of Human Services
CHILD CARE CENTER EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE

Name of Center: West Hancock 3-Yr Old Preschool **Enrollment:** 18 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 52081

Street: 510 9th Ave SW **City:** Britt Iowa **Zip** 50423 **County:** Hancock

Mailing Address: PO Box 278, Britt, IA, 50423

Director's Name: Michelle DeHart **Phone Number:** 641-843-3833

On-Site Supervisor(s): Sarah Kirschbaum **E-Mail:** mdehart@whancock.org

Date(s) of Visit: 04-17-2025

X **Licensing Visit** X **Unannounced Visit** **Off Year Visit** **Administrative Change**

LICENSING VISITS

New Application X **Re-Application** **NA**

Signed Application (470-0722) Received **Yes** **No** X **NA** **Date Signed:**

FIRE INSPECTION X **State** **Local** **NA** **Is Fire Inspection Approved?** X **Yes** **No** **NA**

Date Inspected: 12-01-2022

Comments :

LICENSE TYPE: **Child Care** X **Preschool (ages 3-5 meets three hours or less per day)**

Financial Type: Profit X Non-Profit NA

Accredition: Accredited NAEYC NSACA Other X NA

Program Serves: Infants (0-23 mo.) 2 Years X Preschool-Age School-Age

Get-Well Evening Care Special Needs

SCHEDULE: Year-round X School-Year Summer Only

HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General			25		25
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 05-01-2025 to 05-01-2027
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Raymond Salsbury **Date:** 04-23-2025

I. IF CURRENT LICENSE IS PROVISIONAL, IDENTIFY THE CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

An unannounced annual visit was made to the West Hancock 3 Year Old Preschool program on 04-17-25 where I met with Sarah Kirschbaum, and Michelle DeHart. Michelle DeHart is the school principal and director for the program, and Sarah Kirschbaum is the lead teacher in the classroom. Both are well qualified for the positions they hold based on their education, experience, and on-going training. The program is operated as a non-profit program owned and overseen by the school. While the school does have several preschool programs only the 3 year old classes are subject to DHHS Licensing Standards. The 3 year old preschool is offered in two sessions with one meeting Monday & Tuesday AM, and the other Thursday & Friday AM. There are 18 children enrolled in the program between the two sessions served by a teacher, and a para-educator in the classroom. All aspects of the program subject to Licensing Standards were reviewed during the visit.

The program did move to a new classroom for the current school year due to an increase in enrollment for other school enrollment, and it is anticipated that it will relocate again next year. The program is now making use of a single classroom, #122, in the school building. The room has an open floor plan typical of school room designs. Based on the 2x2 ft. ceiling tiles the room was estimated to be 26 x 30 feet with a total useable area of 780 sq. ft. that would allow for 22 children. Restrooms are located outside the classroom and children are escorted to the restroom as needed. A second sink is located in the classroom to facilitate handwashing. Windows along the exterior wall provide ample natural light, a view of the outdoors, but do not open to allow ventilation. One window is designated as a secondary emergency exit. The room was observed to be clean with no concerns related to maintenance. The room is divided into activity centers through the placement of furniture, shelves, and play structures. Each center was stocked with a supply of materials that were observed to be in good condition and appropriate to the ages of the children present. A copy of the daily schedule and planned curriculum were posted.

Good interactions were observed on the day of my visit with Sarah greeting children as they arrived, and them moving into presenting the planned schedule and curriculum. When greeting the children Sarah did an excellent job of talking with the parents and children with one example being a child that requested a tissue and indicating that the child may have either allergies or an illness and Sarah did ask if the parents had given the child any medications. Another child also arrived with a gauze wrap bandage and Sarah did inquire what had happened to which the child replied they had an "owie". It was discussed that following up with the child further could help to determine how the injury occurred and if any follow-up action such as making a child protective report was needed. When speaking with the children Sarah used positive and energetic tones that created an environment where the children appeared to be feel very comfortable and safe. Sarah makes good use of proactive behavior management techniques such as implementing routines, transition activities, positive recognition, discussion of "Re & Green" choices, and guided problem solving.

Good health and safety practices were observed on the day of the visit. As noted the classroom does have a sink available in the classroom and each child was directed to wash their hands upon arrival. When using the restroom staff did escort the children which also allowed them to supervise not only behavior but also good hygiene practices. While the school custodial staff are primarily responsible for the cleaning and maintenance of the facilities the teachers did clean and sanitize tables as needed prior to food service. One issue that was noted was that the cleaning product used was labeled as not being intended for use on food contact surfaces, and required a potable water rinse. This was discussed with the teachers as being

a step that needed to be included. Chemical cleaners, personal items, and other items that could pose a safety risk to children were stored in areas where they were not accessible to the children. Allergy plans were posted for children with identified allergies, as well as children with diet modifications. The school does have a nurse that maintains health information, medications, and administration of health care related needs. One other issue that was noted is that Sarah did have raw beans that were identified as being intended for use experience tables. It was reviewed that the use of beans is not recommended given that they contain natural proteins that if ingested in their raw state can have a toxic effect and these should be disposed of.

Due to the limited hours of operation meals are not served but snacks are provided. The children take it in turn to bring snacks to share. A recommended list of healthy options is provided for parents. It was reviewed that while a planned menu cannot be developed given that it is unknow what parents would provide a copy of a "menu" of actual served items is required to be maintained. This can help to ensure that credible snacks are being provided, and help to track down information if a child has a negative reaction to any given snack.

The program makes use of a playground located in a fenced inner courtyard area. The playground has a preschool climbing structure which was observed to be in good repair. Foam tiles are used for fall surfacing. Prior reports noted that the foam tiles are beginning to curl and separate at the edges and will need to be monitored for either replacement or realignment to reduce the risk of being a tripping hazard. A new area with a tunnel climber and balance beam have been installed since the time of the last visit. Rubber mulch is use for fall surfacing in that area and a good depth of material was present. The playground also has grassy and paved areas where the children can play. A storage shed was present where additional toys and materials can be stored.

In reviewing administrative records and documentation the required notices for No Smoking, Consultant Contact,, and License Certificate were posted where they were readily accessible and visible to all parents and visitors, but the Mandatory Child Abuse Reporting notice was not. In addition emergency evacuation maps were posted by the exits which showed a copy of the building floor plan and designated meeting locations for evacuation but did not include diagram or written directions for evacuation routes to those locations. In reviewing children's files the program does use the school enrollment and data maintenance system which includes all required information for emergency contacts, authorizations, physicals, and immunization records. I was unable to review the staff file for Sarah on the day of the visit but it was confirmed that Sarah had just obtained her teaching license in the last year and as part of her eligibility to teach would have the required Iowa SING, FBI Fingerprint, and employee physical completed. In addition Sarah had previously worked at licensed daycare while obtaining her teaching license and on-line records do show that she had completed the required trainings with that program. All required inspection logs and certificates were available and current with the exception of Fire & Tornado evacuation drills. It was reviewed that these are required to be practiced and documentation maintained for both drills for all sessions each month. It was further reviewed that while the program can include those done by the school they do not need to sound the alarm for each practice drill to avoid disrupting the school programming. The center handbook has been previously reviewed and coupled with the school policies do contain all required written policies.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The center has had several changes that include moving to a new room, and a new lead teacher. Despite these changes the program has maintained a strong curriculum with a focus on helping children develop school readiness skills.

The school did complete renovations to the playground space for the children increasing the available play structures.

IV. IDENTIFY THE ASPECTS OF OPERATION THAT FALL BELOW THE STANDARDS REVIEWED:

109.4(4): Requirements and procedures for mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse shall be posted where they can be read by staff and parents.
-- The mandatory reporter notice was not present on the day of the visit.

109.10(15)b: Emergency instructions, phone numbers, and diagrams for fire, tornado, and flood shall be visibly posted and documented at least once a month for fire and tornado. Records shall be maintained for current and previous year.
-- Diagramed path, and written direction to designated relocation sites were not present. Emergency fire and tornado drill other than those initiated by the school were not conducted and logged monthly for all sessions as required.

109.15(2): Center shall follow minimum CACFP menu patterns for meals and snacks.Menus planned one week in advance, made available to parents, and kept on file with substitutions noted.Avoid foods with high incident rate of causing choking.
-- A menu of provided snacks was not maintained as required.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

A full license is recommended at this time. Please provide a written response to the licensing consultant identifying a plan of action to correct and maintain those aspects cited as not meeting licensing standards and identifying an anticipated date of compliance. At least one visit will be made to the center during the next year.

*Note: If you are the Child Care Center Director and you feel something is unclear or unjustly cited, please contact your DHS Licensing Consultant to discuss the issue. The child care director may also send a response which will be placed in the licensing file.

*Note: If you are a member of the general public, there may be additional information contained in the public file. You may contact the DHS Licensing Consultant to inquire.