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: 09/17/2026

Licensing Period: 10/01/2026 to 10/01/2028

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 03/25/2024

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

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

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

Quality Rating: 2

- [ ] 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 2:15 PM		
Tuesday	8:00 AM to 2:15 PM		
Wednesday	8:00 AM to 2:15 PM		
Thursday	8:00 AM to 2:15 PM		
Friday	8:00 AM to 2:15 PM		
Saturday			

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 09/17/26 I made an unannounced 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. They also have a floater who visits the classroom once or twice each week. 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. Carol Stika-O'Donnell is the family worker.

NEICAC-Cresco Head Start is in the Cresco Early Childhood Center. It operates Monday through Friday from 8:00 am until 2:15 pm and serves preschool children. There are currently ten 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.

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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, Jolly Phonics, 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 and classroom. The emergency posting includes the program's address and phone number. 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. Snack is provided by Head Start and breakfast and lunch are 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. Playground inspections are completed online. 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. 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 two fenced-in outdoor play areas with the childcare center. One 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 second area uses Poly Extruded Matting (PEM) for fall surfacing. The PEM Playground Matting has shredded rubber contained in chambers. It has climbing equipment with slides and other activities, a sandbox, a stationary bus to sit in, climbing ropes and a balance beam. There is also a grassy area for the children and a picnic table. Shade is provided by the building, a tree and a shade structure with a tarp.

Children's files were reviewed at the time of the licensing visit. I reviewed five children files. The paperwork onsite did not have documentation of permission to seek emergency care. However, Ms. Burke provided me with the information/online form that family workers review with parents during their visits prior to the start of school. There is an area where families agree to emergency care. Ms. Burke states she will make sure this is in children's files moving forward. The forms in the packets do not have an area for the emergency doctor and dentist's addresses. This is required and this should also be added to the forms.

I reviewed one staff file electronically. It was in great condition.

Emergency Preparedness Plans have been completed.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

Ms. Kostohryz has worked for Head Start for thirteen years and has been at the Cresco site for eight years. This experience makes her a great asset to the program and to the families.

The floater was present on the day of my visit so there were three staff members present. The children were out on the playground when I arrived. When they returned to the room they moved to the rug and did a Jolly Phonics lesson with music. The children then moved to the tables for lunch. Staff members had terrific teamwork. They know their roles in the classroom and do them without being told. Staff members had great interaction with the children. They interacted with the children at their level and they were patient with the children. Staff members modeled good manners and used visual cues to redirect behaviors. They provided the children with reminders on using the bathroom and washing their hands. Staff members provided the children with praise and encouragement. Staff members use repetition to teach the children.

Ms. Kostohryz states Head Start helps the “whole” family. They provide resources, crisis funds, transportation for outside appointments, connect families with the food bank and they educate the children.

Ms. Kostohryz states they provide social situations and activities to the children that they may not get to experience outside of school.

Ms. Kostohryz speaks Spanish which is useful in teaching their Spanish speaking students.

Ms. Kostohryz states their students can ride the bus to school if necessary.

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.

Head Start teaches them (the teachers) the best way to teach the children they serve.

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Head Start makes two home visits each year and they have two conferences each year.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

There are no citations.

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. All DHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period.

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Targeted Assessment: Behavior Management:
A full license is issued. All DHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period.

I discussed with Ms. Kostohryz her oversight of behavior management related to helping childcare staff: 1) Understand expectations, 2) managing frustrations, 3) monitor performance. Ms. Kostohryz states Head Start discusses how to handle difficult behaviors during orientation and pre-service meetings. At meetings they discuss burn out and stress. They are taught PBIS methods. They are taught to "tag out" and ask for help. They are told it is okay to leave the room and take a break and they know the administrative team is there to help.

Ms. Kostohryz states that Head Start has a behavioral specialist, Missy, who does a good job of sending the centers tips. They do BIRS (Behavior Incident Report System) to track, record and analyze challenging behaviors. She has an app on her phone with breathing techniques. They are taught to fill their buckets or they will be unable to fill other's buckets.

To monitor, Ms. Kostohryz is always in the classroom. Ms. Milder or Ms. Burke can review classroom cameras if necessary.

Date: 09/29/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Becky Frost

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**.