Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Kids West-Western Hills Elementary

Provider No.: 41577

Address: 600 39th St, West Des Moines, IA, 50265

County: Polk

Director's Name: Ashley Kunz

On-Site Supervisor: Dorothy Frencher

Phone Number: 5156335018

E-Mail: whkidswest@wdmcs.org
kunza@wdmcs.org

HHS Visit Date: 10/21/2026

Licensing Period: 12/01/2026 to 12/01/2028

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 09/23/2025

Comments: West Des Moines Fire Marshal. West Des Moines typically does annual inspections. State licensing requirements are that these are done at least every three years.

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 6:00 PM		
Tuesday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Wednesday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Thursday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Friday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	0	0	0	150	150
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

A licensing inspection was conducted on 10/21/26. The director and the on-site supervisor were both present for this inspection.

All areas of the program were observed. These areas observed consisted of classroom observations and activities, ratios, nutritional practices, health and safety practices, playground observation, field trip and transportation practices, and administrative review.

Kids West - Western Hills is a school-age program located within the Western Hills Elementary School in West Des Moines. Within the building, the center uses the gym and cafeteria (community room). The center also has access to the outdoor playground area. The program was given permission to open by HHS (formerly known as DHS) on 8/22/14. Previous to this date, the center was under the Department of Education's supervision. There is a before and after school component as well as a full-day component during the summer and no school days. Before school hours are 6:30am - 8:55am and after school hours are 3:55pm - 6:00pm (with the exception of early out days). Full day programming is 6:30am - 6:00pm. The center utilizes their own learning curriculum with children. Total child enrollment on the day of the inspection was 78 children.

The center is overseen by a Board and owned by the West Des Moines School District. Ashley Kunz is the director of this program as well as the seven other Kids West programs. Ashley has her Bachelor's degree and has past experience working in child care which includes being a director over multiple related programs. Dorothy Frencher is the on-site supervisor of this program as of 7/2022. Dorothy has an AA degree as well as past experience working in child care.

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NUTRITION: The center provides an AM snack and PM snack to children through the West Des Moines School District nutrition department. During the summer months, the nutrition department also provides the lunches to children. For no school days during the school year, children are responsible for bringing in their own lunches. The center will store/refrigerate lunches as needed during these days. The menu was posted for the month and all food items met CACFP requirements. Children eat in the cafeteria.

TRANSPORTATION/FIELD TRIPS: The center contracts with the school district and takes a school bus and driver for field trips. For all field trips, parents sign an authorization when they do annual updates to their child's file. For all field trips, the center takes a first-aid kit and children's emergency contacts.

PLAYGROUND: The center utilizes the school playground. There is a large blacktop area, large grassy area, a climbing structure area that has poured in place rubber for surfacing, and then a swing/monkey bar area that has pea gravel for surfacing. There is not enough pea gravel under the monkey bars or swings. It is recommended that this area not be used until there is a sufficient amount of pea gravel. It is also recommended that outdoor playground mats be purchased and placed under the monkey bars and individual swings to help preserve the pea gravel depth and surfacing. The "sausage handles" to one climber also need replaced or repaired. Monthly playground inspections are being conducted. The building provides some shade.

During the inspection, initially, all of the children were in the cafeteria and engaged in free-choice play at the different learning stations made available to them. Later on, children were broken up into two groups and one group went to the gym for large motor activities. Toys, tables, and other equipment are being sanitized daily. Children questioned gave specific answers as to where they relocate to for monthly fire and tornado drills.

For more challenging child behaviors, all of the Kids West programs share a behavioral specialist who is on staff. There are sensory boxes available to children who may need them. The on-site supervisor utilizes specific trainings on behaviors and boundaries. Communication between staff is stressed as is communication between staff and children and staff and parents. Staff make an attempt to get to know their families and build relationships.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

There is a secure entrance into the school during programming hours.

A nutritionist reviews all meal items. The school district provides all food items to the program.

Staff use walkie-talkies to communicate throughout different areas used by the center.

A staff person sits at a "communication desk" by the main parent board to greet parents and children and to ensure children are signed into/out of the center.

There is a lot of storage space the center has access to.

The playground is very large with a large variety of activities children can choose from.

The director has quarterly meetings with other directors of before/after school programs in the western suburbs.

Team leaders of the Kids West programs have weekly meetings. The on-site supervisor at this location has weekly meetings with her staff.

There is a good working relationship between the program and other school personnel.

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The on-site supervisor believes she has a good group of staff. Staff reportedly work well together and there is a real sense of teamwork.

Enrollment remains steady.

All Kids West programs have behavioral specialist who works between the eight programs throughout the week.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

109.7(2): Center directors and all staff have the required contact hours of training.
Two staff were missing hard copy and I - Power training documentation.

109.9(1)c: All files contain documentation to indicate that ongoing staff training requirements are met, including current certifications in first aid/CPR and mandatory child abuse training.
Two staff did not have Mandatory Reporter training certificates in their files or I - Power.

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

This consultant had a discussion with specific staff who need to get their training certificates to the director and/or on-site supervisor and/or at least uploaded into I - Power.

It is recommended that swings and the monkey bars not be used until there is enough pea gravel surfacing in place.

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

The center is exempt from environmental testing because they are in a school and only serve school-age children.

I-Power was discussed at the inspection. Staff should continue to upload training certificates and also keep hard copies of these in their files if they are having difficulty uploading training certificates into I - Power.

As mentioned at several past visits, it is recommended that outdoor mats be placed under the swings. It is recommended a lot more pea gravel be put down by the swings and monkey bars. It was also noted that several "sausage handle bars" on one climber are cracked and need replaced or repaired.

A new, full, two-year license is recommended.

Date: 10/22/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Nate Knepper

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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**.