Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: NEICAC-Postville Head Start and CDC

Provider No.: 18175

Address: 210 S Ogden, Postville, IA, 52162

County: Allamakee

Director's Name: Sharon Burke

On-Site Supervisor: Jesania "Jes" Vargas

Phone Number: 5638647642

E-Mail: sburke@neicac.org

HHS Visit Date: 09/15/2026

Licensing Period: 10/01/2025 to 10/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 09/01/2026

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	7:45 AM to 3:20 PM		
Tuesday	7:45 AM to 3:20 PM		
Wednesday	7:45 AM to 3:20 PM		
Thursday	7:45 AM to 3:20 PM		
Friday	7:45 AM to 3:20 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	50	0	50
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

On 09/15/26 I made an unannounced off year licensing visit to NEICAC-Postville Head Start & Child Development Center. I met with Kristen Wengel and Jesania “Jes” Vargas , the lead teachers for the classrooms. Ms. Vargas is the on-site supervisor. She has worked for this program for three years. There are two teachers in each classroom and the program has a floater visit the program twice each week to help in the classrooms.

Ms. Vargas is the on-site supervisor. Amy Moore is the program manager for the program. Sharon Burke is the director of the early childhood programs for NEICAC-Head Start. Her office is in the administration building in Decorah. Laura Castillo is the family worker.

The program is in the Postville Child Care Center. The program operates Monday through Friday from 7:45 am until 3:20 pm. The core preschool hours are 8:30 am until 2:30 pm. On Wednesday the program dismisses at 1:00 pm. The program serves children aged three through five years old. There are currently 32 children enrolled.

The program operates out of two rooms. An inspection of each room was completed. Windows provide natural lighting. The rooms are decorated with 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 in each classroom.

The centers observed on the day of the licensing visit include library, Lego/blocks, table toys, games, puzzles, transportation, computers, art, dramatic play, Play Doh, 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. Centers are clearly labeled.

Cots are used to nap.

There are two sinks in Classroom A and two bathrooms with one toilet in each one. Handwashing procedures were posted. There are two sinks in CD and a bathroom with two toilets. Handwashing procedures were posted. Diaper changing procedures are also posted in both bathrooms and mats are used if necessary.

Postville is a multi-cultural community. There is a large Hispanic population. There are bilingual teachers to communicate with the children and families. This is a great asset.

The center participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The children receive breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snacks. Breakfast and lunch are prepared by Postville School and is delivered to the program. Head Start staff members prepare the snack in the classroom. The school provides the program a monthly breakfast and lunch menu. Menus were posted. Allergies are confidentially posted. Family style is used.

The program uses the childcare center's kitchen. The kitchen was clean and organized. Dishes are taken back to the kitchen to be put through the dishwasher, but the program is using mostly disposable products. Food items were stored according to NHSPS guidelines. There is a refrigerator in Classroom CD and thermometers were present.

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

The program uses a variety of resources to prepare lesson plans. They use Creative Curriculum and the GOLD assessment tool. They also complete Brigance assessments and ASQ-SE assessments. They use Handwriting Without Tears, Jolly Phonics, Second Step, Character Counts and Mighty Minutes. They have Kindergarten Readiness lessons. 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. The NE Iowa Food and Fitness Initiative visit the classrooms once each month to discuss a healthy lifestyle and nutritious food. Parents are provided with a monthly newsletter to inform them of studies, activities and special dates.

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. Laura Castillo is the family worker for the Postville site. The children receive hearing, vision and dental screenings.

There was a phone with emergency numbers with the program's address and phone number in both rooms. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and evacuation diagrams were posted by the main program doors and outdoor exits in each room. A daily schedule was posted and a lesson plan was available for review in each room.

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. They also practice intruder drills every month and a discuss bus drills three times each year.

I reviewed documentation of monthly playground inspections. Playground inspections are completed online.

The radon test was completed in November 2023 and is good for five years. Results were within EPA guidelines. The fuel burning inspection was completed and no concerns were noted. A carbon monoxide detector was on site in the hallway of the childcare center. Outlets were protected. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 09/01/26.

The parent information is located on a door between the classrooms. The mandatory reporter, childcare consultant and the handbook availability were posted. The license was conspicuously hung. A no-smoking sign was posted at the entrance. Update my HHS consultant poster to reflect my new email address and the new HHS website.

Head Start uses the childcare playground. There are two areas for children aged two through five-years-old. One area is

newer and paid for by the school system. Poured-in-place rubber is used for fall surfacing. There is a piece of climbing equipment shaped like a pirate ship with slides, a rope climbing wall, fireman pole and other activities. There are also swings. The second area for this age group is a naturalistic area. There is a large naturalistic sandbox that has tree stumps and larger rocks to play on. They have two slides built into a large hill. Woodchips are at the bottom of the slides. There is a playhouse. Trees are used for shade. There is a pergola shade structure in the area that covers a picnic table and a concrete path.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

The staff members were observed to have great interaction with the children. Most staff members are bilingual, which is important because of the diversity in the classroom. When I arrived, the children were on a walk. When they returned to the classroom the children engaged in free play at centers. Staff members moved around the space for supervision and to interact with all the children. They were nurturing to upset children. They provided the children with praise and gave them high fives. They were patient and flexible with their schedules. They provided the children with praise. Staff members modeled good manners. They used positive redirection when necessary and they used PBIS cards to show the children their expectations. Staff members sang with the children during transitions.

The program has an IQ4K level of 2 that expires on 09/30/27.

The program is in a secure building and there are cameras in the rooms.

Ms. Moore states the strengths that they have as Head Start is that they look at the child, the family and their strengths as the parents are the first teachers and they, as a team, are the second. They include parents in activities for at home as well as what they are doing in the classroom. Head Start helps the families if they have concerns for their child, whether it be academic or social emotional and try to guide them as a team to best help them.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

There were no violations.

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

Targeted Assessment: Behavior Management:
I discussed via email, Ms. Moore's oversight of behavior management related to helping childcare staff: 1) Understand expectations, 2) managing frustrations, 3) monitor performance. Ms. Moore states Head Start does a lot of PBIS training for their preservice and mid-year. They talk about the behaviors and how they can positively help redirect the children if at all possible. They do BIR (Behavior Incident Report) which helps them document the behaviors so they can work on it or with AEA to see if there are other interventions that they can try.
Ms. Moore talks to staff members and tells them if they are feeling frustrated to be sure to "tag" with another coworker to help remove themselves when getting frustrated. She encourages them that this is a better strength then trying to deal with it in frustration. Then they can discuss what worked and did not work for the child/children.
Ms. Moore states she is in the classrooms weekly to help with children and observe. In addition, they also monitor them once a month. They have team meeting notes and CAT (Community Assessment Team) meetings to discuss the children and families. If there are children that are having some difficulties, they discuss what interventions they have tried for at least two weeks to see if this could help redirect children and help staff.
Also, center managers have access to the camera if they know that a classroom has some difficult children and they can check and make sure staff members are handling things appropriately.

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Date: 09/28/2026

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**.