Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: UDMO Early Childhood Program-Jefferson School

Provider No.: 30281

Address: 411 E 10th St, Spencer, IA, 51301

County: Clay

Director's Name: Angie Mitchell

On-Site Supervisor: Denise Graettinger

Phone Number: 7122648855

E-Mail: dgraettinger@udmo.com

HHS Visit Date: 09/19/2025

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

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 05/01/2024

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

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

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

Quality Rating: 2

- [X] Accrediation — Comments: NAEYC

Program Duration:

- [ ] Year-Round
- [X] School Year
- [ ] Summer Only

Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Program Population Served:

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General			108		108
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

On 09/17/25 I completed an unannounced visit at this head start program. I was able to meet the director Angie Mitchell and speak with Denise Graettinger.

Denise is highly qualified for her position, bringing extensive education and experience in early childhood care and education. This program is one of several sites overseen by UDMO and offers Early Head Start and Head Start services for children ages 2 through 4. The program operates out of the former Jefferson Elementary building in Spencer and utilizes six classrooms to support child programming. Hours of operation for this center are 7:00am to 5:00pm with early out on Wednesdays at noon. Early HeadStart operates yearly but does close for a couple of weeks in August to prepare for the next school year. The program does have a morning, and afternoon wrap around daycare program for children that remain at the center for those parents who work.

The purpose of this visit was to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the program. This included an administrative review, observation of classroom environments and daily activities, assessment of health and safety practices, review of nutritional services, and an evaluation of the outdoor play environment. There are 68 children enrolled in this program. There were 58 children at the time of my visit.

The center uses the Creative Curriculum, which is designed to support the social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development of each child through intentional, play-based learning experiences. Classroom activities are thoughtfully planned to encourage exploration, problem-solving, and creativity, while also supporting individual learning goals. Each classroom is organized into distinct learning centers to promote hands-on exploration and engagement. These centers include areas for art, science, reading, dramatic play, and sensory activities, allowing children to explore a variety of concepts and skills. Teachers incorporate creative strategies to enhance the learning environment, such as adding colored small stones to the sand table to stimulate sensory and imaginative play. Materials are rotated and thoughtfully arranged to encourage curiosity, problem-solving, and independent learning, supporting the developmental goals of each child.

The center has a full kitchen. Meals are all prepared on-sight. The kitchen is very clean and well organized. A copy of the menu is posted for reference, and a variety of nutritious food options are provided each day. All children eat in their respective classrooms, with lunch served family-style to encourage social interaction and self-serving skills. Children also brush their teeth after breakfast, promoting good oral hygiene as part of the daily routine.

I observed good handwashing practices by both staff and children. Each classroom maintains a general first aid kit in the classroom, and a nurse is also present on-site. The center has good cleaning policies and procedures in place.

Fire/tornado drills were current as was playground inspection. Radon testing is being completed soon, and results will be

sent to me. The boiler and fuel burning appliances have been completed by the Spencer Community School. They are also waiting for this paperwork and will forward once it has been sent to the center.

The goals of the program are to continue to pursue a higher IQ4K level.

They have recently written a grant to update their playground.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

This program continually seeks to exceed licensing requirements and implement best practice recommendations.

The center practices PBIS for children who are having a difficult time adjusting/behaving.

They have an AEA room on-site to assist children needing this service.

This staff is very dedicated to the children and families that they work with. I observed very good engagement between staff and children.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

109.13(5): Centers shall ensure that food preparation and storage procedures are consistent with the recommendations of the CACFPs.

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

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

A full license is recommended at this time.

At least one visit will be made to the center during the next year.

Date: 09/22/2025

HHS Licensing Consultant: Leann Steinhauer

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

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**.