Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: HACAP Head Start - Cedar River Academy - Taylor

Provider No.: 52956

Address: 720 7th Ave SW, Cedar Rapids, IA, 52404

County: Linn

Director's Name: Lacy Blackhawk

On-Site Supervisor: Leiha McNeal

Phone Number: 3195582477

E-Mail: cregan@hacap.org lblackhawk@hacap.org

HHS Visit Date: 09/17/2025

Licensing Period: 09/01/2025 to 09/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 07/29/2025

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

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

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

- [ ] Accrediation

Program Duration:

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

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Program Population Served:

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General			32		32
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

HACAP is a community action agency currently providing head start services throughout 9 Iowa counites. HACAP began in 1968 serving families in Johnson, Jones, and Linn Counties. From 1973-1981, HACAP expanded to provide services in Benton, Iowa, and Washington Counties. Then, in fall of 2020, HACAP again expanded to provide services in Delaware, Dubuque, and Jackson Counties. Specifically, HACAP Head Start (HHS) - Cedar River Academy - Taylor (CRAT) is located inside Cedar River Academy at Taylor Elementary School which is part of the Cedar Rapids Community School District. HHS-CRAT received permission to open and commenced operations on 9/2/2025.

Multi-site HHS early childhood program executive director is Christi Regan. Ms. Regan has a BA degree in elementary education with early childhood reading, has been employed with head start for over 20 years, and continues to participate in much child development related training. Specific multi-site director is Ms. Blackhawk. Ms. Blackhawk has been a director with HHH since December 2020. Ms. Blackhawk has a BA degree in early childhood education, a plethora of experience working with children, and continues to participate in child development related training. HHS - CRAT's specific on-site supervisor is Leiha McNeal. Ms. McNeal has been an HHS on-site supervisor since September 2025. Ms. McNeal has an AA degree in Early Childhood, a plethora of experience working with children, and continues to participate in much child development related training.

On 9/17/2025, building, grounds and program space were observed to all be in good repair. Primary programming occurs in one classroom #21 with enclosed restroom and hand washing facilities. Families and children were observed being warmly greeted for the day by staff. Evidence of positive discipline was observed in the form of verbal assistance and reassurances. On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were observed to be in ratio and actively engaged with the children in a variety of activities that included some breakfast rituals, center play experiences, and routine transitions. Children appeared comfortable with staff and to be enjoying the day.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

HACAP's mission and goal is "...helping people develop skills to become successful and build strong communities..." and "...to bring about a greater degree of social competence in the young children..."

HHS has the following website for families and the community to learn more about the program: https://www.hacap.org/headstart.

As of 9/17/2025, HHS locations continue to be overseen by a board of directors. The program's management team (e.g. Ms. Regan, Ms. Blackhawk) are invested in the community and are mentors helping connect families and children with various community resources and events. The management team continues to have a system of organization in place to help ensure

administrative items are completed and maintained in a secure manner. The management team remains knowledgeable of licensing guidelines as well as their own program's policies and procedures. On the day of the license visit, Ms. Blackhawk discussed how this newly established HHS location has been operating for a little over 2 weeks. Ms. Blackhawk commended staff on their ability to have already connected with families and school personnel helping create partnerships and an overall good learning environment.

On 9/17/2025, HHS - CRAT had a newly established area for required postings and parent-staff-program information. HHS - CRAT is utilizing technological communication resources and offering family programming activities. HHS programs have a Parent Committee, Policy Council, and family support workers. Curriculum continues to include Creative Curriculum, teacher-inspired ideas and regular program-family conferences. Ms. Blackhawk acknowledged how staff are still working to ensure the arrangement of classroom child materials and furnishings is most encouraging to learning.

As of 9/17/2025, HHS childcare locations continue to have and update as needed policies and procedures that include those for safety, daily health checks, hand washing, cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting. On the day of this monitoring visit, staff discussed how they help ensure the children's space is sanitary and hazard free each day by following their current policies and procedures as well as maintaining checklists for cleaning and maintenance. Staff also talked about having support from their board, support from their HHS maintenance person and new increasing supports from the school district (e.g. school kitchen staff, school administration, school maintenance, school custodial team) as to daily building and grounds daily conditions and repairs.

HHS locations including HHS - CRAT each have emergency plans, policies, and procedures. While HHS - CRAT is a new location having commenced operations on 9/2/2025, other HHS childcare locations have successfully navigated through flooding events, relocations, January 2019 Polar Vortex, 2019 health (covid-19) pandemic, 8/10/20 Derecho Storm, 2021 food supply issues, 2022 infant formula shortages, air quality alerts (2013, 2015) and 7/19/24 global technology outage.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

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

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

Program refrigerator shall have a thermometer.

Diapering surfaces are required to be non-porous for proper cleaning and disinfecting to occur between each diaper change. Wood and diapering pads are porous and shall not be used. Remedy.

The current doorbell-entrance does not allow staff to vet persons who have rung the doorbell and/or are attempting to access the building without staff having to leave programming to check who's there. To help ensure the program remains safe, sanitary and hazard free, install an increased secure entry system that includes a doorbell with camera.

Licensing strongly supports installing some kind of outdoor signage for families and the community to have knowledge of this new program.

Outdoor play area was observed to have much weed-thistle-grass overgrowth. Please increase weed-thistle-grass control measures to help prevent possible skin irritations and decrease insects, vermin, etc.

A ground hole was observed near the wooden steps-stage area on the outdoor playground. It's unclear as to depth of the hole or integrity of the ground surrounding it. Remedy.

Increase cushion surfacing depth underneath outdoor child climbing play equipment.

Remove the unsecured metal post leaning against the shed on the outdoor playground.

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Increase loose large gross materials (e.g. balls, riding toys, chalk, hula hoops, romper stompers, low-to-ground balance beams, balance boards, bubbles).

Please increase early childhood classroom consumables (e.g. crayons, markers, paints, construction paper, popsicle sticks, cotton balls, glue, pom-poms, yarn, safety scissors).

To help with the items noted in the special recommendations section of this report, please apply for the "Growing Iowa" fund designed to support childcare in Iowa by connecting with CCR&R (https://iowaccrr.org/staff/; Region 5 Director Becky White at 563-484- 4587).

A full license is issued. Thank you for the visit.

Date: 10/02/2025

HHS Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons

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**.