Iowa Department of Human Services
CHILD CARE CENTER EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE

Name of Center: Cardinal School District Head Start **Enrollment:** 120 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 25005

Street: 5414 Highway 16 **City:** Eldon Iowa **Zip** 52554 **County:** Wapello

Mailing Address: PO Box 658, Ottumwa, IA, 52501

Director's Name: Liz Fairchild **Phone Number:** 641-682-8741

On-Site Supervisor(s): Dana Belzer/ Jamie Sparks **E-Mail:** lfairchild@sieda.org

Date(s) of Visit: 04-21-2025

Licensing Visit X **Unannounced Visit** X **Off Year Visit** **Administrative Change**

LICENSING VISITS

New Application X **Re-Application** **NA**

Signed Application (470-0722) Received X **Yes** **No** **NA** **Date Signed:** 05-13-2024

FIRE INSPECTION X **State** **Local** **NA** **Is Fire Inspection Approved?** X **Yes** **No** **NA**

Date Inspected: 03-07-2024

Comments : Due every 3 years, conducted by State Fire Inspector Seth Jones

LICENSE TYPE: X **Child Care** **Preschool (ages 3-5 meets three hours or less per day)**

Financial Type: Profit X Non-Profit NA

Accredition: X Accredited NAEYC NSACA Other NA

Program Serves: Infants (0-23 mo.) 2 Years X Preschool-Age School-Age

Get-Well Evening Care X Special Needs

SCHEDULE: Year-round X School-Year Summer Only

HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summary Only*

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General			140		140
Summer					0

QRS Rating: 3

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 11-01-2024 to 11-01-2026
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Jill Seibert **Date:** 04-30-2025

I. IF CURRENT LICENSE IS PROVISIONAL, IDENTIFY THE CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

Cardinal School District Head Start is located at Cardinal Elementary School in rural Eldon. Cardinal preschool is a full day, 4 day a week program housed inside Cardinal Elementary. It serves 3 and 4 year old students. Currently, there are four 3 year old rooms and four 4 year old classrooms. Cardinal has a partnership with SIEDA Head Start. The 3 year and 4 yr old programs stay in the same classroom the whole day.

Students in both the 3 year old and 4 year old program are taught Music, Art, and PE by licensed, Cardinal teachers. Students in the preschool program also get to experience the field trips, special guests, and assemblies that the rest of the students participate in. There is no charge for Cardinal preschool services and meals and snacks are also provided.

On 4/21/25 I made an unannounced off year visit to Cardinal School District Head Start and met with staff members that lead each classroom, as well as aides. A previous visit was made to the program building on 4/10/25 observing the after school program. The On Site Supervisor for the center is Dana Belzer and she was present also. The program has 4 classrooms and accesses the gym and school cafeteria. Jamie Sparks, Family Development Specialist is appointed OSS in case OSS Belzer is absent. She meets the points for this position and is typically present daily. Tiffany Miner was also added as an FDS in 2025.

Preschool classes are not offered on Mondays. The center is owned and operated by Southern Iowa Economic Development Association (SIEDA). The director Ms. Elizabeth Fairchild also directs several other SIEDA Head Start programs in southern Iowa. Ms. Fairchild has a BA degree in K-6 Elementary Education and 13 years of experience in Head Start programs. She was formerly a Head Start teacher for 4 years was a Center Supervisor for 6 years. She currently directs Keokuk County, Jefferson County, and the Cardinal Community Partnership, Wapello County sites, Appanoose and Davis County sites.

The preschool rooms are within the school or nearby modular buildings and can only be accessed by first entering the school building. Visitors to the school must check into the building at the front office. When a visitor arrives, they must enter the front door, as all other doors are locked. A visitor badge will be given at the time of sign in to fill out. Visitors are directed by office staff to wear the tag in a visible area. Visitors must also sign out.

Learning philosophy and curriculum of Head Start are: Physical Development and Health. Children will enter Kindergarten able to complete personal care tasks such as dressing, toileting, and washing hands independently. Children will coordinate body movements to manipulate objects, to navigate and to balance. Children will use refined wrist and finger movements to independently manipulate writing, drawing & art tools. Social & Emotional Development: Children will follow simple classroom rules and teacher directions. Children will be able to function as part of the classroom community by using socially appropriate behaviors with peers and adults. Children will regulate behavior and express emotions, wants and needs in appropriate ways. Approaches to Learning: Children will express curiosity, interest, and initiative in exploring the environment, engaging in experiences, and learning new skills. Children will be able to purposefully choose and sustain work on age appropriate, interesting tasks.

Observation of Rooms:

The classrooms are clean, bright, attractive, and equipped with a satisfactory variety of child sized furniture, equipment, toys, games, and activities for the children. The classrooms are not self-contained. They have phones but lack direct exit to the outdoors. The curriculum is Creative Curriculum. Interest centers available to the children include: blocks, children's literature, dramatic play, toys and games, puzzles and small manipulatives, art, music and movement, science and discovery, sensory tables, writing center, and computer area.

Center Nutrition:

Breakfast, a noon meal, and snacks are provided by Cardinal Elementary School and prepared in the school kitchen by school staff. Meals are served family style in the school cafeteria. Snacks are prepared by Head Start staff and served in the classroom. Posted monthly menus indicate that minimum nutritional requirements are met. Some items with USDA are not creditable for CACFP. No open food was observed in the unit. Other dry goods were stored appropriately. No food was observed to be stored on the floor. No expired food items were found. The kitchen staff follow USDA standards. The center also has a Nutrition Aide provided by Head Start. Snack menus were an issue the date of the visit. This will be ongoing since the school provides snack.

Children dine at child size tables and sit in small chairs. During snack, the children are read to, and they discuss books or staff sit and visit with the children. All tables, chairs and sinks are sanitized with this method are sanitized with IDPH approved products that I observed. The children help set the table, pour their own drinks, and clean the table at lunch time. CACFP program rules appeared to have been met the day of the visit. The program prepares written menus of monthly snacks and lunch and posts them. This information is also included in the monthly newsletter.

Center Health and Safety:

Medication policies and procedures including prescription and non-prescription medication administration in accordance with licensing regulations, physician directions, and parental consent were reviewed. Medications (including sunscreen) are stored in their original containers with physician/pharmacist directions and label intact when on the premises. Emergency medication is kept in the child's room and inaccessible to children. An ill/injured area is the nurse's office if she is available or a designated space in each classroom. All prescribed medication should have current pharmacy/physician label intact and accompanying documentation. Emergency medication should be stored with the child so it is accessible in an emergency.

The program had all allergy action plans signed and dated by a physician and posted in the classroom with the child.

CCNC indicated on 12/15/23, "Any further guidance would be to reiterate, Keeping one plan in the child’s file and one with the child at all times along with the emergency medications including epi pens/Benadryl or Diastat/Tylenol etc. I don’t know how strict CACFP programs are about parent/physician signature or if the program is officially enrolled in CACFP but may need all signatures of parents or providers on those. Individual children’s food allergies are posted where they can be seen in the classroom and wherever food is served. (Std. 4.2.0.10) All are posted in each classroom by the emergency backpack and by the entrance of the classroom. Additionally, allergies should be posted as follows from the Health and Safety Checklist: Let me know if either of you need additional information."

OSS Belzer stated, "All of these forms that are attached in this email thread are placed in Child Plus. Additionally, copies are kept in the Cardinal Nurses office, my office and in the classrooms."

Room arrangements are somewhat neat and organized. Most staff identified storage as an issue, and some rooms were somewhat cluttered. Storage is in plastic crates and closets.

The children have access to sink/toilets in a hallway. The new school building has 11 toilets accessible to all children in the program. The program should have one toilet and sink for 15 children in each room. Hand washing posters were easily observed.

Room lighting consists of both natural light from windows as well as adequate interior lighting. The classroom and bathroom facilities were observed to be clean. All classrooms have new censor lighting, and a newer ventilation system. New fire alarms and an emergency lighting systems are present. Heating and cooling is provided by a Geothermal system and is forced through ceiling vents

Storage and maintenance of first aid kits in each room were viewed. First-aid supplies were sufficient to address minor trauma. All teachers had the most recent first aid kit checklist. Labeled first aid kits were identifiable and easy to access above the children's coat racks. All kits should be labeled, (even mobile units).

Environmental testing and the maintenance of any necessary detection equipment were reviewed. Radon testing has been

conducted within the past 5 years. Results were within EPA guidelines (under 4 pCi/L). The school installed a Geothermal heating and cooling system so an annual fuel burning appliance inspection is not required. An inspection was conducted on the new system in October 2013. Non-battery-operated carbon-monoxide detectors should be in the rooms. At least 2 units should be in opposite ends of the program space. Carbon monoxide detectors are present. The school has outdoor air exchanges. The Elementary School building was built in 2010. As a result, a lead paint assessment is not required. The school building is on rural water. As a result, a private analysis is not required.

General regulations regarding safety policies and procedures were reviewed, especially in relation to the pandemic. Cabinetry or shelving that could be toppling hazards have been anchored to the wall.

The program has no pets or plants. Each program room should accommodate each child so that they have at least 35 square feet of usable floor space.

The children brush their teeth twice daily post snack and lunch. Toothpaste is placed on wax paper, prior to being put on the brushes. Toothbrushes were adequately stored. Sufficient toileting articles and hand washing supplies were observed in the restrooms. Children are required to be potty trained to participate in the program.

Food waste containers were covered in all rooms.

The program needs to utilize the correct Volunteer Form. The program does utilize volunteers. This was noted in years past.

Emergency plans and drills for fire and tornado were reviewed. Drills should be completed monthly. Tornado and fire drills should be practiced and documented once a month. Emergency safety plans were posted in each room. Evacuation procedures were posted. A "safe room" is available that all children have access to in case of an intruder or a weather emergency.

Staff are using a school provided cleaner to clean toilet and table areas reviewed by CCNC Jamie Crouse (Iowa Department of Public Health).

Center Playground:

The center uses a newly installed outdoor play area on school grounds specifically designed for preschool age children. The area is was fenched in during the 22-23 school year and is not near any obvious hazard. The area is naturally shaded. Shade is provided by a canopy over the climbing and activity toy, the building and trees around the perimeter of the play area. The area features a large, anchored, metal/plastic climbing and activity toy. It also contains benches, basketball hoops and a swing set. The entire play area is surfaced with rubber matting. Children also use riding toys on the rubber matting surface. The playground also contains a large grassy area and the children may access the school track to maintain adequate space requirements. Each child should have a minimum of 75 square feet of usable space.

Playground inspections should be conducted and documented monthly. These inspections are sent into the main office monthly.

Center Transportation Arrangements/Field Trips:

The center provides no transportation. Transportation for field trips is provided in school bus vehicles owned and operated by Cardinal School District. All children in the program have signed parental waivers to ride the regular school bus. A first aid kit is on every school bus. Children that do not ride the buses are transported by parents to and from the program. CPR certified staff and emergency contacts are taken on field trips as well as first aid kits. The center staff report that field trip ratio rules are followed.

Center Administrative Records:

Child misbehavior is addressed by Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. Intervention strategies are developed for each child depending on their level of social and emotional skills. Interventions include reminders to the child of appropriate behavior, direct instruction in problem solving skills, redirection, planned ignoring, and positive reinforcement of appropriate behavior. Child misbehavior is addressed by PBIS.

Postings, including Emergency evacuation postings and mandatory abuse reporter, no smoking postings were observed hanging in the rooms were not on the parent boards. They should be posted where parents drop off or pick up children. The license and state consultant contact information were present. We discussed that the license should be posted. Special upcoming events calendars were also posted. A Copy of Comm 204 is kept in each room.

Emergency evacuation maps as well as 911, Emergency and Poison Control numbers, center phone & address posted by the

phones in each room. A new emergency preparedness plan has been reviewed and an acknowledgement should be signed and dated by all employees.

Regulations regarding required written policies provided to parents in the form of a parent handbook. The Center handbook and Emergency Preparedness Plan contain all required policies.

Child files are reviewed annually. They are kept in child plus. All children are required to have updated physicals and immunizations. If children do not have updated physicals, the Head Start Nurse alerts the OSS and Family Service Workers. Children may not attend the program without an updated physical. All children must have updated emergency contact information, dental and medical provider information and pick up authorization information. CCNC Jamie Crouse is working with the program on updating all medical provider information. Ms. Sparks and Ms.Emery help manage child paperwork for the program including recording child physical updates. Immunization audits are conducted annually.

Staff files are reviewed annually. All staff employed by this program are over 18 years old. Tamara Wheaton, Child Development Administrative Assistant from the main Head Start office in Ottumwa provides me with these records (4/28/24). Head Start employs 11 staff. Iowa Criminal Record Checks (2 yrs), Staff Physicals (3 yrs), Fingerprints (4 yrs), Criminal Conviction Form (once), CPR (2 yrs) First Aid (2 yrs), Mandatory Reporter training (3 yrs), Continuing Education Hours (12 hours yr per Head Start standards) were reviewed. School district staff must also take 6 hours of PD approved by HHS per year. Per Head Start the training the school district takes meet HHS standards. All staff have taken Essentials training. It should be noted SEIDA has an excellent history of record keeping and compliance with training and background check requirements. This is duly noted. However, at times records are hard for HHS to access. This has been discussed the past few years. Cardinal developed a tracking system in 2023 for the Cardinal Head Start staff ensuring all HHS requirements are met and updated annually. Dana Belzer stated on 3/29/23 she would work with Principal Heather Buckley on this task. I also phoned Director Liz Fairchild regarding easily accessible staff records in 2023. Accessing staff records were challenging again this year. Cardinal School District personnel records were provided May 8, 2024 upon request after HHS contacted the program three times. By HS report, it appears nearly all staff requirements are met, which is an improvement. However, the issue of access has not been completely addressed. Head Start administration is working on a solution.

The Emergency Preparedness Plan is specific to the program. Staff are trained on the plan annually and sign and date acknowledgement of such.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The center sends a monthly newsletter to parents.

The center provides vision screening services to the children in cooperation with the local Lions Club.

The center provides hearing screening services to the children by SIEDA nursing staff.

The center provides dental and fluoride varnish services to the children in cooperation with River Hills Center for Community Health.

The center provides Brigance screening services to the children to monitor physical, social, and emotional development.

The program secured cabinetry in past years that could serve as toppling hazards.

IV. IDENTIFY THE ASPECTS OF OPERATION THAT FALL BELOW THE STANDARDS REVIEWED:

1. 109.11(3)a: Center shall ensure that: Facility and premises are sanitary, safe, and hazard free. Adequate indoor and outdoor space is provided. The outdoor area shall include safe play equipment and area of shade. Sufficient space provided for dining. Sufficient lighting shall be provided. Sufficient ventilation. Sufficient heating. Sufficient cooling. Sufficient bathroom and diapering facilities. Equipment, including kitchen appliances, are maintained so as not to result in burns, shock, or injury to children. Sanitation and safety procedures for the center are developed and implemented to reduce risk or injury or harm to children and reduce transmission of disease. Tall cabinetry should be anchored so they are not toppling hazards. This has been cited in the past.

2. 109.9(2)g: Any child with allergies, a written emergency plan. Copy shall accompany child if they leave the premises.

All plans must be available for staff to reference in the event of a medical emergency. All plans should be signed by parent and physician.

3. 109.15(2) Center shall follow minimum CACFP menu patterns for meals and snacks. Menus planned one week in advance, made available to parents, and kept on file with substitutions noted. Avoid foods with high incident rate of causing choking. Some school age foods do not meet CACFP requirements for preschool age children.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

IHHS encourages you to contact your local nurse consultant with IDPH. Child Care Nurse Consultants work with child care and early education businesses. Businesses may call or send questions to a child care nurse consultant about health and safety policies, health programs, health of personnel, and specific child health or safety issues. CCNC Jamie Crouse Child Care Nurse Consultant Iowa Department of Public Health) in cooperation with the American Home Finding Association serves as CCNC for this center. The center is responsible for contacting CCNC Crouse for consultation regarding health and safety issues such as hand washing, outdoor play area regulations, toppling or tipping hazards, allergy action plans, medical issues, etc....

CCNC Mary M. provided the following the past year:

Cardinal head start
Visit
record checkup-x 2(initial and followup) (x20 kiddos)
4 classes handwashing demonstration to kiddos-
5 classes oral health demonstration to kiddos- attempted other 3 class rooms but was unsuccessful with getting return message.

IHHS recommends the center consult with Child Care Resource and Referral. They offer centers assistance with meeting the HHS regulations, QRS, infant/toddler concerns, room arrangement and environment, developmental concerns, Best Practice information, CDA assistance, or any questions or concerns you may have. Please visit the following website for more information: http://www.iowaccrr.org. Your consultant is Karen Lauer. She is available to assist with questions or concerns related to curriculum, supervision, transitions, behaviors, etc... OSS Belzer indicated Consultant Lauer has visited the program many times in the past year (in the office) assisting the program with IQ4K.

She has provided the following the past year- Cardinal Head Start since May 2024
• 19 TA's (IQ4K, Training Consultation and Business Policies & Practices)
• 2 Face to Face visits and 1 Virtual (training consultation and Business Policies & Practices)

*Note: If you are the Child Care Center Director and you feel something is unclear or unjustly cited, please contact your DHS Licensing Consultant to discuss the issue. The child care director may also send a response which will be placed in the licensing file.

*Note: If you are a member of the general public, there may be additional information contained in the public file. You may contact the DHS Licensing Consultant to inquire.