Health and Human Services

# Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

## CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: NEICAC-Oelwein Head Start & Child Dev

Provider No.: 18218

Address: 317 8th Ave SE Ste E, Oelwein, IA, 50662

County: Fayette

Director's Name: Sharon Burke

On-Site Supervisor: Ashley Brewer

Phone Number: 3192832304

E-Mail: sburke@neicac.org

HHS Visit Date: 09/23/2026

Licensing Period: 10/01/2026 to 10/01/2028

**Fire Inspection:**

Date Inspected: 04/20/2026

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 | 8:00 AM to 2:15 PM | | |
| Tuesday | 8:00 AM to 2:15 PM | | |
| Wednesday | 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM | | |
| Thursday | 8:00 AM to 2:15 PM | | |
| Friday | 8:00 AM to 2:15 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 | 40 | 0 | 40 |
| Summer | | | | | 0 |

**1. Basic Overview**

On 09/23/26 I made an unannounced licensing visit to NEICAC-Oelwein Head Start & Child Development. I met with Nichole Leech, the program manager for the program. She has been the program manager for four years. She has been employed with Head Start since August 2016 and has an AA in early childhood. I also met with Ashley Brewer, the on-site supervisor and lead teacher in classroom B. She has been with this program since November 2017. Sharon Burke is the director of the early childhood programs for NEICAC-Head Start. Her office is in the administration building in Decorah. Meranda Haranck and Deb Scharnhorst are the family workers for the program.

Ms. Brewer is the lead teacher in Classroom B; Janel Hansel is the lead teacher in Classroom A; The program currently employs four teachers and they have a floating staff member they share with another site.

The Oelwein Head Start and Child Development Program is in the same building as the Little Husky Learning Center and the Oelwein Community School preschool and early childhood special education preschool program. The program operates from 8:00 am until 2:15 pm in both classrooms. They have a 1:00 pm dismissal on Wednesdays. Head Start serves preschool aged children. There are currently 35 children enrolled. The program partners with NIT to provide services to children with identified needs. Keystone AEA can be used if the child is on an IEP.

The program operates out of two classrooms. An inspection of each room was completed. Windows provide natural lighting for each room. The rooms are decorated with pictures of the children, the children's art projects, and posters to assist the children with the learning process, such as the alphabet, shapes, colors and numbers. There is an area for circle time in each classroom. Each classroom has a projector.

## CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

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. Cubbies are in each room to store the children's backpacks and belongings.

The classrooms share a bathroom with three toilets and two sinks. Additionally, there is a sink in each room. Handwashing procedures were posted in all locations. There was diaper changing procedures posted in the bathroom and a mat available in case children needed a diaper change.

The program uses a variety of resources to prepare lesson plans. They use Creative Curriculum and the GOLD assessment tool. They complete Brigance assessments and ASQ-SE assessments. They use Handwriting Without Tears, Second Step, Jolly Phonics, Character Counts, Read it Again, and Skill Streaming. 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. Each week they focus on math, health, science, social studies, literacy, music and movement and nutrition. Each lead teacher prepares their own lesson plans. Each classroom has a parent board and 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. Ms. Brewer's classroom is a State of Iowa Model PBIS 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.

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

Cots are used to nap.

The program participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The program provides breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. Breakfast and lunch are prepared by the Oelwein School cafeteria staff. Snack is provided by Head Start. The children eat breakfast and lunch in the cafeteria and they eat snacks in the classroom. They serve breakfast and snack family style and lunch is served cafeteria style with the children going through a line to get a tray. Lunch and breakfast menus are prepared by the school district food director and a new menu is prepared each month. A Head Start nutritionist prepares the snack menus. Menus were posted. Allergies were posted in a confidential manner in the classrooms. Dishes are returned to the school kitchen to be put through the dishwasher. There is a refrigerator and milk cooler in the dining area that are used by Head Start. There were thermometers present.

I was present when it was lunch time. Both classrooms had the children use the bathroom and wash their hands and then move to other activities before going to lunch. Children must wash their hands directly before going to lunch. Sitting on the rug or playing with centers negates the action of handwashing.

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

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. I reviewed documentation of monthly playground inspections. Playground inspections are completed online. The radon test was completed in January 2024 and is good for five years. Results were within EPA guidelines. The building is geothermal and does not require a fuel burning inspection or carbon monoxide detector. Outlets were protected. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 04/20/26.

The school and Head Start partnered to develop a new playground. It is a large fenced in area with several choices for the children. They use a synthetic turf specifically made for playgrounds with a cushioning material. There is a concreate path and real grass for the children also. There are several pieces of climbing equipment that include activities like slides, climbing walls and still rings. There are different types of swings and steppingstones for balance. There is an obstacle

course. There is a playhouse with a tunnel and a play doctor office and fire department area. They have a basketball hoop, music center and there are several games painted directly on the turf, such as tic tac toe, hopscotch, four square and a bullseye.

The parent information is located on a bulletin board inside the entrance. 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.

Children's files were reviewed at the time of the licensing visit. I reviewed five children files. The paperwork onsite did not have documentation of permission to seek emergency care. However, Ms. Burke provided me with the information/online form that family workers review with parents during their visits prior to the start of school. There is an area where families agree to emergency care. Ms. Burke states she will make sure this is in children's files moving forward. The forms in the packets do not have an area for the emergency doctor and dentist's addresses. This is required and this should also be added to the forms.

I reviewed one staff file electronically. It was in great condition.

Emergency Preparedness Plans have been completed.

**2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program**

I observed great teamwork between all the staff members between both classrooms. While outside on the playground the staff members spread out and moved around the entire space to supervise all the children, not just the children in their classroom. There was great communication between staff members when they had to deal with a sick child and then another child who had an accident in their pants to make sure the children were cared for while also making sure they were within ratio. Staff members were great at providing reminders to the children regarding ules and expectations. They talked with the children about using their words to communicate what they want. Staff members were calm and reassuring. They provided the children with praise and encouragement. They interacted with the children at their level by bending over to talk with them or by sitting on the floor with them. They were patient and used positive redirection or PBIS cues when necessary. They were flexible with the schedule. Staff members were singing with the children and were enthusiastic while reading books or dancing to songs.

Ms. Leech states they provide transit for three-year-old children to help with transportation to get to and from school.

Ms. Leech states the staff members are very comfortable in their PBIS skills. Ms. Brewer's class has been the state model for PBIS for two years. They have lots of peer to peer interaction.

Ms. Leech states they are lucky to have the same teachers for the last few years.

Ms. Leech states they have a floater staff member that they share with the Waverly site.

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

The program has cameras in the classrooms.

Ms. Leech states that each classroom has a Facebook page and they communicate with parents through the messenger part of the app.

Ms. Leech states they have a good relationship with school administration.

Ms. Brewer states the children are learning sound social skills and they are learning to interact with other children in a positive manner.

Ms. Brewer states they are preparing the children for kindergarten. She states they meet with the kindergarten teachers and they have reading buddies who visit the class.

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Ms. Brewer states Head Start encourages families to participate and get involved in the learning process for their children. They have family nights for parents and children monthly. During the meetings they taught the parents about PBIS methods, they made first aid kits and other fun educational activities. They send PBIS activities home for the families.

The children receive hearing, vision and speech screenings. The children also receive fluoride varnish applications on their teeth.

**3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard**

There are 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. All DHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period.

Targeted Assessment: Behavior Management:
I discussed with Ms. Leech her oversight of behavior management related to helping childcare staff: 1) Understand expectations, 2) managing frustrations, 3) monitor performance. Ms. Leech states Head Start uses PBIS, several visual cues and timers with the children. Ms. Leech states the staff members just know what they need to do. Teachers have very structured play in centers with visuals. Chat GPT was used to help break down expectations. She states that Head Start has a behavioral specialist, Missy, visit sites to make sure all the "checks and balances" are in place. She uses the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) as an assessment tool to measure how well teachers implement the Pyramid Model practices that support social-emotional competence in children. The Pyramid Model looks at equity, inclusion, belonging and celebration of diversity. She does a "Chart of Awesomeness" from AEA. It is a tiered level where they build up the foundation from the bottom up.

Ms. Leech states during their pre-service they are taught that they can tag out and that it is okay to ask for a break. They discuss what frustrates teachers and how they could handle it. She states some staff members have a code word they use with each other to let the other staff member in the room know they need a break and for them to switch the children they are working with.

Ms. Leech states she monitors the situation by being present. She is required to do observation in the rooms once each month. She has a tool she uses.

Date: 09/29/2026

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**.