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

Name of Center: West Town Charlie Brown **Enrollment:** 237 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 22023

Street: 1780 S Monroe Ave **City:** Mason City Iowa **Zip** 50401 **County:** Cerro Gordo

Mailing Address: 1780 S Monroe Ave, Mason City, IA, 50401

Director's Name: Amber Morud **Phone Number:** 641-424-0065

On-Site Supervisor(s): Kris Tabbert (director), Amy Monahan (asst. director) **E-Mail:** westcb@charliebrownpreschools.com

Date(s) of Visit: 05-30-2023

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

LICENSING VISITS

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

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

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

Date Inspected: 10-11-2021

Comments :

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

Financial Type: Profit X Non-Profit NA

Accredition: Accredited NAEYC NSACA Other X NA

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

X Get-Well Evening Care X Special Needs

SCHEDULE: X Year-round School-Year Summer Only

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General	51	36	87	57	231
Summer					0

QRS Rating: 4

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 07-01-2023 to 07-01-2025
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Raymond Salsbury **Date:** 06-02-2023

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

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

An unannounced annual visit was made to the West Town Charlie Brown center on 05-30-23 where I met with the program executive director Amber Morud, Center director Kris Tabbert, and Assistant director Amy Monahan. All are well qualified for the positions they hold based on their experience, education, and on-going training in early childhood care. Amber oversees 3 centers operated under the Charlie Brown programs. Kris has been the director of this center since 2010. Amy became the assistant director in 2022. The center moved to the current building in November of 2017. The center provides daycare and preschool programming for infants through school age children. The center does partner with the Mason City school district to provide services under the 4 Year Old Preschool Grant. There are 237 children enrolled in the center served by 28 staff. All aspects of the program subject to licensing standards were reviewed.

The general layout and design of the center remains the same as in prior reports. The center has classrooms determined by age with 3 classrooms for infants, and two classrooms for 2 and 3 year old children that are split by developmental level. The program also has a separate classroom for the formal 4 year old preschool program. The school age children have classroom space on the lower level and the upper level with a staircase that connects the two. Each room was observed to be clean with minor maintenance issues such as pealing paint and missing baseboard that did not present an immediate safety concern. All but 3 of the classrooms (older 2 year olds, and the 3 year old classrooms) have direct secondary egress to the outdoors. The 3 year old classrooms do have connecting doors to other classrooms. Each classroom has access to restrooms directly from the classroom so that children do not need to leave the room. The infant rooms, 2 year old, and 3 year old classrooms also have changing stations present in either a connecting pass-through room, or attached bathroom. Each room has additional sinks available to facilitate hand washing. Each room has large windows along the exterior walls that provide ample natural light and a view of the outdoors. The layout of each room provided the children with room to play and without creating any blind areas. It was noted that the school age room did have a small tent structure erected for a "Calm Down" space which did have a door closure where a child or children could be and would not be visible. Staff do need to be aware of this concern and ensure that they are positioned to be able to observe the children when they are making use of that space, or the structure should be modified to allow direct line of sight.

Each room is divided into activity centers though the placement of furniture and play structures. The variety of centers does increase with the age groups of each room with older age groups including more options for small manipulatives, and more cognitive options such as math and science. Each activity center was well stocked with a variety of toys and materials that were in good repair and generally appropriate to the ages of the children present though a few toys with small parts were found in classrooms with younger children. It was reviewed that children under 48 months of age tend to be prone to mouthing toys and items that are less than 1 1/4" in diameter, and 2 1/4" in length can present a choking risk. These should be removed from infant rooms, and for older children kept in storage where they can be brought out for supervised play. Each classroom had a daily schedule posted which was being followed. Curriculum plans were not posted for many of the classrooms but it was noted that each had developed a parental newsletter for the coming month. While the newsletter identified that they would be working on numbers and letters it did not specify what those would be. It was reviewed that a copy of the planed curriculum does need to be posted and if the teachers would expand the newsletter to identify what the learning focus would be whether specific letter/number concepts, or more general themes such as Farm Animals, Beaches, or Summer Destinations.

Observed interactions varied between classrooms and the teachers but were generally very positive and engaging. One example of very positive interactions was in a classroom when a parent and child arrived the teacher greeted both asking the parent about the child's morning, when the child last used the restroom, and seeking other information to better understand the child's care needs. When speaking to the child the teacher was very engaging talking about the things they were doing, and suggesting things that the child's peers were doing and whom the child could join. In other areas teachers were observed to have more a more observational approach to supervision which did result in situations where they appeared to be more frustrated and reactive to behavioral issues as the children engaged in self-directed play that included inappropriate choices or more physical peer interactions. Ratio was maintained as required by age in each classroom with at least 2 teachers present in each room.

Good health and safety practices were generally observed. I was able to observe several diaper changes while at the center. Copies of the required diapering procedures postings were present at most changing stations but not all. It is noted that those which were missing were in the classrooms with older children where it did not appear that the stations were being used frequently or at all. Despite this the postings are required by all changing stations and should be reposted in the event the station is needed. The staff that were observed when changing diapers did follow the posted procedures. One issue that was noted is that staff did not pre-clean the changing stations prior to use of the disinfectant spray. While some cleaning products may be labeled as One Step Cleaning this generally refers to products that have integrated detergents and cleaning with another product is not necessary however those products including the one used by the center do note to pre-clean heavy soil and gross filth before treating for disinfection. It was reviewed with staff that they should spray the surface, wipe it clean, and then re-treat with the product which is then allowed to dwell the required time to be effective. Good cleaning practices were otherwise observed with the staff cleaning toys and equipment throughout the day, waiting for children to be out of the immediate area when using cleaning products, and storing chemical cleaners where they were not accessible to children. Good hand washing practices were observed with staff and children washing their hands as needed following diapering/restroom use, prior to meals, and other times they became soiled. Good storage practices were observed for both prescription and over the counter medications. One storage issue that was observed were staff purses being left out in a couple classrooms in an area where they would be accessible to children. Purses and diaper bags frequently contain items such as medications which can be a safety risk to children and need to be stored where children would not have access to them. First aid kits are present and contain materials necessary to address most common first aid needs. During the visit one child was observed to have a small scape on their ankle from a fall on the playground. The teacher did bring the child into the building to treat the injury and the child declined a bandage stating they don't like them. The teacher did get a cold wet compress for the child to hold on the scrape. Safe sleep practices were generally followed but a couple of issues were discussed with the classroom teachers. This included one infant that was sleeping a crib with a decorative elasticized headband. It was reviewed that this should be removed when placing the child in the crib to prevent the risk of it moving to where it could cover the nose/mouth, or to around the neck. A crib was also observed to have a white noise machine attached to the railing. While the crib was not in use at the time it was reviewed that Safe Sleep does prohibit items being hung from railings. An option to place the device into a container under the crib was provided to staff as a way for it to be near the child when sleeping. All cribs and cots had bedding that was appropriately fitted, and clean.

The center has 3 playground spaces with one for infants and toddlers, one for preschool, and one for school age children. Each had a good variety of equipment and shade structures were either created by installed awnings or covered patios. The infant space uses artificial turf over sand beneath the climbing structures and swings present. The preschool space uses foam tiles under a climbing structure, and replaced the pea grave beneath the swings with artificial turf over sand. The school age space uses pea gravel for fall surfacing which has developed a hard pan layer most notably in high traffic areas around the ladders and discharge points. Loose fill materials should maintain a minimum of 9 inches of depth of material. The center will either need to aerate or supplement the fall surfacing of that playground space. The climbing/slide structure in this area also needed maintenance. The attachment bolt and nut for a bell ringer had loosened which allowed the body of the bell to hang lower than intended and move in a manner that created a potential crush point. In addition the set screws attaching the safety panels to the slide access had loosened allowing the panels to be able to pull away from the retention mounting pegs. These need to be tightened or replaced to ensure that the safety panels are secure. All playground spaces are enclosed by chain link fencing which was observed to be in good repair.

The center has a full kitchen and meals are prepared on-site. The kitchen was observed to be generally clean though there was some old food and other debris observed under the oven. There was no indication of any insect or rodent infestation concerns observed in either the kitchen or any other areas of the center. Good food storage, preparation, and handling practices observed on the day of my visit, though some food items stored in classrooms were not properly stored. As a reminder all food items whether stored in the kitchen or classroom and whether intended for child consumption or not must be stored in air tight sealable food grade containers to reduce the risk of being an attractant to insects and rodents, and spoilage. Meals are pre-portioned and staff used measured scoops to ensure that each child was provided a full serving. Meals are served in the classrooms and the teachers do provide supervision at the tables. A menu is posted and identified a good variety of nutritious meal options. The meal served on the day of my visit was consistent with the planned menu of macaroni & cheese, green beans, raisins, and milk.

In reviewing administrative records all required notices were posted in an area readily accessible to all parents and visitors.

Emergency evacuation notices were missing by some exits from programming spaces. As a reminder both written and diagram instructions for fire and tornado evacuation are required by all exits from all programming spaces. A random selection of staff and child files were reviewed and compared to the self-audits completed by the center which were found to be accurate. In reviewing those files the self-audit identified 4 child files have an expired physical. The self audit for staff files identified 4 that needed an initial or updated physical. Inspection logs and certificates were available and current for emergency drills, playground, radon, carbon monoxide, and fuel burning appliances.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The center is currently participating in the QRS program which seeks to implement best practice recommendations and is rated a 4 STAR program in 5 STAR scale.

The center has several staff who are enrolled in the T.E.A.C.H. program which helps staff to obtain additional training and wages.

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

109.10(15)b: Emergency instructions, phone numbers, and diagrams for fire, tornado, and flood shall be visibly posted and documented at least once a month for fire and tornado. Records shall be maintained for current and previous year.
-- Evacuation notices that include both diagram and written instruction for fire and tornado evacuation were not posted by all exits from all programming spaces as required.

109.11(3)a: Center shall ensure that: (1) Facility and premises are sanitary, safe, and hazard free. (2) Adequate indoor and outdoor space is provided. The outdoor area shall include safe play equipment and area of shade. (3) Sufficient space provided for dining. (4) Sufficient lighting shall be provided. (5) Sufficient ventilation. (6) Sufficient heating. (7) Sufficient cooling. (8) Sufficient bathroom and diapering facilities.
(9) Equipment, including kitchen appliances, are maintained so as not to result in burns, shock, or injury to children. (10) 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.
-- The outdoor school age play area is not safe. Pea gravel used as fall surfacing needs to be aerated or supplemented to ensure a minimum depth of 9 inches of loose material. Retaining bolts, and screws for the bell ringer, and safety panels of the spiral slide shall be tightened or replaced. Staff purses shall be stored in areas where they are not accessible to children.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

A full license recommended this time. Please provide a written plan to correct and maintain those issues cited as not meeting licensing standards and an anticipated date of correction. At least one visit will be made to the center during the next year.

*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.