Health and Human Services

# Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

## CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Messiah Lutheran Preschool

Provider No.: 21202

Address: 2411 West Ave, Burlington, IA, 52601

County: Des Moines

Director's Name: Marjorie Gerst

On-Site Supervisor: Krystal Kline

Phone Number: 3197547591

E-Mail: margie.gerst@gmail.com

HHS Visit Date: 09/22/2026

Licensing Period: 01/01/2027 to 01/01/2029

**Fire Inspection:**

Date Inspected: 12/31/2025

Comments: due annually, completed by Burlington Fire Department

**Report Visit Type:**

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

**License Type:**

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

**Quality initiative:**

Quality Rating: 3

- [ ] 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 5:00 PM | | |
| Tuesday | 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM | | |
| Wednesday | 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM | | |
| Thursday | 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM | | |
| Friday | 8:00 AM to 12:00 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 | | | 39 | | 39 |
| Summer | | | | | 0 |

**1. Basic Overview**

Messiah Lutheran Preschool is located in two rooms of the Messiah Lutheran Church in a residential area of Burlington. The preschool has been in operation since 1964. The program was initiated by the church. Marjorie Gerst has been the Director of the preschool for 35 years. Ms. Gerst has an AA in Early Childhood Education. On site supervisor Krystal Kline was appointed in 2017. Ms. Gerst is mentoring Ms. Kline to be director when Ms. Gerst retires. The preschool is well established and has been open for more than 50 years.

The program consists of 1 spacious classroom for preschool aged children and another room for other activities/coat storage, etc. The program has child restrooms attached to the two rooms and another area for coats and back packs in the entry way. Beginning in the summer of 2019 the program began offering summer care for two weeks in July per parent request.

Program Observations:

HHS made an unannounced licensing visit to the program on 9/22/26. All program areas were observed at that time. The visit consisted of classroom and building area review and observations of activities, ratios, nutritional practices, health and safety practices, playground observation, field trip and transportation practices, and administrative review. Director Gerst assisted me with providing all required documentation. Both staff members were present during the visit.

Each classroom has age-appropriate curriculum posted. Lesson plans were appropriate which included: active and quiet times, large-group activities, small group activities and time to play alone or with others, indoor and outdoor play times, and time for children to select their own activities and teacher directed activities. A wide variety of toys, educational games, puzzles, and books were available to the children to utilize. They were all in good condition. The environment was clean

## CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

and well maintained. Classrooms were decorated with educational materials that were age appropriate.

Program Nutrition Practices:

Food preparation and storage procedures were consistent with NHSPS. The preschool had thermometers in all refrigerators and freezers. Parents are expected to provide snack on a rotating basis. The program stores snacks on hand if supplementation is necessary. Each child is served a nutritionally balanced meal and snack as defined by CACFP guidelines per posted menus. Menus were detailed and specific. This is duly noted.

Program Health and Safety:

Medications are stored in original containers with physician/pharmacist directions and label intact. Medications are inaccessible to public and the center is able to provide documentation of medication given. Each child with allergies has an allergy action plan. Staff and children have been observed in years past hand washing and they followed recommendations from the IDPH for appropriate hand washing. During this visit children were engaged in hands on table activities with both teachers. All first aid supplies recommended by the IDPH were available in the centers first aid kits. Any child with allergies or asthma/seizures, etc... has an Allergy/Asthma/Seizure Action Plan on file signed by a physician.

Tornado and Fire Drills were practiced and documented once a month as required.

Radon testing is due every 5 years and detected levels of radon should be below 4 pci/L. It was conducted in 2023. The church has a boiler. All centers: Annual inspection prior to heating season of all fuel-burning appliances to reduce risk of carbon monoxide poisoning and shall install one carbon monoxide detector on each floor that conforms to UL Standard 2034. The inspection was conducted in August 2024. Carbon monoxide detectors are present. Expiration dates should be checked. A lead-based paint assessment is not mandated since the building was constructed after 1971.

The program has excellent staff to child ratio-1:7. Natural lighting is provided by windows lining the length of the room. New flooring was installed in the classroom this past year.

Program Playground:

The center playground includes a climbing structure, slides, swings, grassy area and tricycles. Surfacing is provided by mulch. Shade is provided by trees. The outdoor play area is immediately attached to the back door of the church for easy access for children. No safety hazards were observed on the visit. The church courtyard is also accessible for outdoor play. A tree and the building provide shade. The Child Care Weather watch is utilized if outdoor play is questionable due to varying weather conditions. A first aid kit is taken outdoors when the area is in use. Emergency contacts and emergency medications are also taken outdoors with the children. Fall surfacing is of adequate depth for fall surfacing.

Program Field Trips and Transportation:

The center takes field trips with parents present. Parents and children meet at the location, stay at the location and then take their own children home. The program visits Starr's Cave, the local Fire Department, Happy Joe's Pizza, the Recycling Center and the Library. Transportation would only be provided in an emergency situation. Since each child's parent is present field trip ratios are not followed as the children are under the supervision of their parent.

Program Administrative Records:

The following posting were available on the date of my visit: Mandatory Reporter, Handbook Availability, Consultant Contact, License, Emergency Procedures for fire and tornado, and no smoking signs.

Creative Curriculum is implemented by making use of children’s interests to enrich our program. Each year the program has a butterfly cocoon or a praying mantis in the classroom in the fall, paper snowflakes in the winter, and pictures of baby animals in the spring; all helping to teach necessary academic skills.: The alphabet, number recognition, counting and sorting, shapes and colors, science and social studies are all subjects addressed. The preschool states, "Using this approach provides repeated exposure and reinforcement to make learning fun and relevant."

A daily schedule includes a variety of educational, recreational and faith-based activities that work on school-readiness.

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Child files are reviewed annually. Child files are reviewed annually including an updated physical and immunizations, dental and medical information, pick up authorizations and emergency contacts. IDPH can conduct an immunization audit.

Staff files are reviewed annually. The program employs two staff, the Director and OSS. They include fingerprint results (due every 4 years), Iowa SING checks (due every 2 years), mandatory reporter training (3 years), CPR/1st Aid certification (2 years) and professional development training (annually). Staff have updated physicals (every 3 years). Both staff took UP training due within the first 90 days of employment.

The Director created an Emergency Preparedness Plan and staff are trained annually on the plan. They sign and date acknowledgement of such.

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

The center offers a wide variety of age appropriate activities.

Director and core staff have been maintained for several years.

The center has guest speakers including: parents about their careers, law enforcement, paramedics and fire fighters.

https://messiahburlington.org/messiah-preschool/ is the preschool website

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

1. 109.11(8)c: All centers: Annual inspection prior to heating season of all fuel-burning appliances to reduce risk of carbon monoxide poisoning and shall install one carbon monoxide detector on each floor that conforms to UL Standard 2034. The boiler report expired in December 2025. The Director agreed to get a new inspection from the church. She provided this to HHS on 9/24/26. CORRECTED

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

N/A

**5. Special Notes/Recommendations**

Based upon this review, it is recommended that this center remain in Full licensing status. The center is directed to continue to monitor day to day practice and adjust accordingly to continue to ensure licensing rule is met consistently. It is important to note, all HHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period. HHS encourages you to contact your local nurse consultant.

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. Please visit the following website to find out who your consultant is: http://idph.iowa.gov/hcci/consultants Nancy Granaman is the CCNC for this preschool. The Director has a relationship with CCNC Granaman.

CCNC Grnaman stated she provided the following, :"Messiah: 8/20/24 on site staff training-Playground Supervision and Sun Safety. Drop in visit 11/6/24. I make regular "drop in" visits to and I am sure I am missing some dates. Sometimes I am needing to update Business Partnership Agreements or I have things to give them ( gloves, Infectious disease manuals)."

HHS encourages you to contact Child Care Resource and Referral Consultant Tabitha Copeland. They offer centers assistance with meeting the DHS regulations, QRS, infant/toddler concerns, room arrangement and environment, developmental concerns, Best Practice information, CDA assistance, or any questions or concerns you may have. The

center is aware they may access CCNC and CCR&R Consultant on a consistent basis. Consultant Copeland provided help with general things for trainings and answered questions this past year.

Date: 09/25/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Jill Seibert

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**.