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

Name of Center: KCE Champions LLC @ Erskine Elementary School **Enrollment:** 50 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 51871

Street: 600 36th ST SE **City:** Cedar Rapids Iowa **Zip** 52403 **County:** Linn

Mailing Address: PO Box 39, Swisher, IA, 52338

Director's Name: Mona Williams **Phone Number:** 319-504-3408

On-Site Supervisor(s): Bethany Bree Hogue, Carisa Seidenkranz **E-Mail:** monawilliams@discoverchampions.com knorrick@discoverchampions.com

Date(s) of Visit: 01-10-2023

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

LICENSING VISITS

New Application **Re-Application** X **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: 02-15-2022

Comments :

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

Financial Type: X Profit Non-Profit NA

Accredition: X Accredited NAEYC NSACA Other NA

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

Get-Well Evening Care 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				175	175
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 08-23-2022 to 08-01-2024
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons **Date:** 01-13-2023

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

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

During 2022, KCE Champions LLC is opening 27 new childcare programs throughout Linn County. Specifically, KCE Champions LLC @ Erskine Elementary School commenced operations on 8/23/2022. KCE Champions LLC @ Erskine Elementary School is located inside Erskine Elementary School which is part of the Cedar Rapids Community School District. The program primarily operates Monday through Friday before and after school hours 6:30am to 6:00pm. KCE Champions does have the ability to extend hours on scheduled early release days, emergency late start days, and emergency early-out days. During the summer, full days of emergency closing (example snow day), and some breaks (holiday and spring), this site has the ability to operate full days and/or combine for full days of care at another KCE Champions LLC location. KCE Champions LLC @ Erskine Elementary School serves only school-age children. Current enrollment is 50.

Multi-site director Mona Williams has an AA degree, over 15 years experience working with children, and continues to participate in much child development related training. Multi-site co-director Bethany "Bree" Hogue is completing an AA degree in early childhood education, has over 14 years experience working in children, and continues to participate in much child development related training. On-site supervisor Carisa Seidenkranz has a BS degree in athletic training, prior experience working with children and continues to participate in much child development related training.

On 1/10/2023, program space was observed.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

KCE Champions LLC @ Erskine Elementary School is located inside an elementary school in a predominantly urban neighborhood. The profit program provides a variety of early learning and childcare opportunities as well as accepts many different of funding sources to help meet the needs of children and families throughout the community.

KCE Champions LLC @ Erskine School has established the following website for families and the community to learn more about the program: https://crschools.us/students-and-families/quick-links/champions/.

According to the family and employee handbook, the philosophy of KCE Champions LCC is that "...learning is meant to be a natural, joyful experience. Our goal is to help your child develop socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually. Children thrive when the process of discovery is lovingly encouraged and gently reinforced..." KCE Champions LCC is a division of KinderCare Education. The history of how KCE Champions LLC came to fruition and evolved to present day (including 1969 KinderCare Learning Centers founded, 1998 corporate headquarters moved from Montgomery Alabama to present-day Portland Oregon, 2003 KCE Champions LLC joins KinderCare Education, 2013 KinderCare launches its Early Foundations proprietary curriculum) is impressive. KinderCare Education serves more than 186,000 children in 40 states, and Champions specifically serves more than 40,000 of those children in 21 states and Washington, D.C. Champions partners with principals, teachers, and parents to create more than 600 before- and after-school and year-round learning environments.

During 2022, KCE Champions LLC opened 27 new childcare programs throughout Linn County. Management reported

Iowa made Champion history in that Linn County had the largest number of Champion childcare sites opened in any given state within such a short timeframe.

In 2021, KinderCare Education earned a fifth Gallup Exceptional Workplace Award - one of only four companies worldwide to receive this award five years in a row. Champions has made a continuous commitment to earn and re-earn Corporate Accreditation from Cognia a global leader in advancing excellence in education through accreditation. Management reported future goals include participation in state and local quality initiatives including IQ4K.

The management team (e.g. Ms. Williams, Ms. Hogue, Ms. Seidenkranz) has remained consistent. KCE Champions LLC has systems of organization in place to help ensure administrative items are completed as required and maintained in a secure, confidential manner. Management is knowledgeable of licensing guidelines as well as their own program's policies and procedures. It's evident they are taking great pride in being able to offer new childcare programming throughout the community and in partnership with the Cedar Rapids Community School District.

Management continues to hire professional staff (e.g. educated, trained, experienced) who have prior experiences working with children and display a strong worth ethic. KCE Champions LLC provides professional staff hiring and onboarding and holds regular staff meetings reviewing rules and policies while offering staff supports. KCE Champions LLC has participated in college hiring fairs to find persons with a passion for and/or professional desire to work with children. Ms. Williams and Ms. Hogue express much gratitude towards their team of employees being proud of their flexibility and willingness to help out in various capacities as needed.

KCE Champions LLC has emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. Management discussed having a KCE Health and Safety Team with telephone hotline and acknowledged how each staff is trained on emergency preparedness.

KCE Champions LLC continues optimal communication between the program/staff and families. The program has organized parent-staff/program information centers, offers regular program newsletters, utilizes technological communication resources, and supports family programming activities. In fall 2022, a family night for all Champions locations was held at Morgan Creek Park with an estimated 550 families participating in the welcome event.

KCE Champions LCC school-age curriculum focuses on six content areas that research shows enhance school-age children’s growth and development as well as help build the essential skills needed to be successful in school and beyond: Character Development, Community, Creative Expression, Executive Function, Inquiry-Based Learning, and Literacy. The program provides child interest areas in creative arts, literacy, math and construction, puzzles and games, and science. Daily fitness, healthy eating, and homework assistance (as needed) are part of operations. There are additional opportunities offered for enrichment clubs and Junior Counselor leadership roles for older school-age students. Summer/extended breaks curriculum is also enhanced with guest speaker events and off-site field trips. 2022 summer field trips included trips to the local nature center, Bloomsbury Farm, local parks, local swimming pools, bowling, local movie theater, mini golfing, and snap-ology. Summer camp 2023 enrollment is currently underway!

KCE Champions collaborates well with many community partners including the Cedar Rapids Community School District, Kids on Course, local businesses, CCR&R, and health professionals. KCE Champions LLC @ Erskine Elementary School has a solid partnership with the Cedar Rapids Community School District. School custodial staff, school administration, school nurse, and school food service personnel help ensure the children's space is sanitary and hazard free each day. The school kitchen is inspected at least annually by the health department. The school kitchen provides all food items for the childcare program. There is an AED onsite.

Each child is engaged in a daily health check upon arrival for early detection of apparent illness, communicable disease, or unusual condition or behavior which may adversely affect the child or the group. The program has supplies, policies and procedures for hand washing as well as cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing.

On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were nurturing and attentive to the children's needs. The area of study included "Puppets". The day's events included full day programming due to an in-service school day. Children had access to an array of materials (e.g. books, imaginative play options, building materials, puzzles, games, journals, crafts) that encouraged innovative play. Evidence of unique curriculum from previous days was observed (e.g. puppet theatre, stick puppets, shadow puppeting, book entitled "The Art of Hand Shadows", marionette puppet craft). Activities observed were many (e.g. family/child greeting/arrival for programming, create your own comic book, make your own picture frame, chalk on paper experience, finger puppet creations, crossword puzzles, balloon toss, mighty mouse large group game). Staff provided a companionable presence allowing children to have many choices in their play experiences (e.g. including learning a new group game color tag). Routine transitions (e.g. breakfast rituals, clean-up activities) worked smoothly into the program's welcoming and cooperative play environment. Staff were overheard providing children with many words of encouragement, utilizing positive redirection when needed and engaging children in much meaningful discussion. Children responded well to staff and appeared to be truly enjoying their experiences as observed in the full engagement of all, the exploration to try different activities and much child laughter.

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

None noted.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

The program's license remains in full status. Thank you for the visit.

*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.