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

Name of Center: Conmigo Early Education Center **Enrollment:** 75 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 26659

Street: 828 Scott Ave **City:** Des Moines Iowa **Zip** 50309 **County:** Polk

Mailing Address: 828 Scott Ave, Des Moines, IA, 50309

Director's Name: Kay Strahorn **Phone Number:** 515-242-0225

On-Site Supervisor(s): Kenya Gonzalez **E-Mail:** KGonzalez@herdsm.org

Date(s) of Visit: 04-14-2023

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

LICENSING VISITS

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

Signed Application (470-0722) Received X **Yes** **No** **NA** **Date Signed:** 03-09-2023

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

Date Inspected: 08-22-2022

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

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	16	20	67	37	140
Summer					0

QRS Rating: 3

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 04-01-2023 to 04-01-2025
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Debbie Hammer **Date:** 04-21-2023

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

N/A.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

A full licensing visit was conducted on 4/14/23. The director and on-site supervisor were present throughout the visit.

All areas of the program were observed. These areas observed consisted of classroom observations and activities, nutritional practices, health and safety practices, playground observation, field trip and transportation practices, and administrative review.

This program is housed in the Hispanic Educational Resource Center. This bi-lingual educational center provides a variety of services to the children and families of the community including ESL classes, parenting courses and childcare. On July 1, 2011 the name of the center was changed from Xochipilli to Conmigo Early Education Center. The word Conmigo means "with me".

The child care program was first offered in 1995. Since then the space used for the program has grown and been remodeled a few times. Access to the building is obtained by entering a door code, or ringing the buzzer and identifying yourself before being buzzed in. The hours of operation are 6:30 am-5:00 pm.

Kay Strahorn is the Director, starting in this role in August of 2022. Kay has a Bachelor's degree in Early childhood and elementary education.
Kay has 17 prior years of experience in childcare settings. Kenya Gonzalez is the on-site supervisor, starting in this role approximately three years ago. Kenya has her CDA and several years of experience in a childcare setting. Both meet qualifications for their positions.

The center offers care to children who are infants up to school age. The center continues to offer summer care to school age children, however does not provide before or after school programming to the school age children. There are 6 enclosed classrooms used year round, and during the summer months the school age children are able to use the open area in the middle of the center, which is used for large motor play during the school year.

The center has partnered with Drake Head Start for a total of 10 slots between the infant, toddler and two year old rooms. This has allowed for the center to receive additional resources for the children and families.

The center has a Universal Pre-K classroom and this is the only Universal Pre-K classroom in the state of Iowa that is bi-lingual. The center partners with the DSM public school district to provide this program.

The center uses the Creative Curriculum as well as the Frog Street curriculum. The center hours are from 6:30 am - 5:30 pm.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The center has a QRS rating of 3 stars, this is based on a 1-5 scale.

This center provides a diverse program to the children and their families in the community. The teachers are very committed and dedicated to helping build a successful foundation for these children so they can succeed in life. The staff are very professional and view this as a career and not just a job. They are proud of their rooms, and they are proud of what they do to make a difference in the lives of the children they work with every day.

There are several long term staff at the center, at 27 years, 20 years and 10 years working at the center.

The center participates in the TEACH program and one staff is currently working toward their Associate's degree and one working toward their CDA.

The center has partnered with several agencies in the community to offer resources and additional services to the children and families. The center offers parenting classes at the center through Iowa State Extension, which are currently being offered on-line, however have not taken place in awhile. The center has a strong partnership with Drake Head Start and United Way.

Staff in the infant and toddler rooms are trained in PBIS, other staff who are interesting in this training can take this as well. Staff are well equipped to handle difficult situations by children with behavioral concerns.

The center takes pride in embracing two cultures at one time. This is a very unique program. Most of the staff are bi-lingual.

The center has a Facebook page and a Website.

Volunteers with the book buddy through United Way come to the center weekly to read to the children. There is also a bi-lingual story time every couple of months at the center.

The center offers hearing, vision and dental screenings for the children.

The center has OT and Speech therapy rooms located in the building so parents do not have to take time off of work to transport their child for these therapy sessions through Children's Resource.

The center has class Do-Jo on i pads in the classrooms for easy communication with parents.

The staff can wear uniforms making them easily identifiable.

The center has cameras in all of the classrooms and outside.

The center has a Family Support Worker which is a great benefit for the administration team and families.

The center has strong partnerships with ECQUiP, United Way and Drake Head Start, the director meets routinely with these partners.

The staff have shown dedication and resiliency during this time of the pandemic, working long hours.

The center received grant money and has added a bathroom to the 2 year old classroom.

Two new structures have been added to the outdoor playground area, with new surfacing.

The new administration team works well together.

The center has a home atmosphere and is a safe place for the children.

All of the staff have an opportunity to attend the spring AEYC institute and at the fall AEYC institute staff at this center have been asked to conduct a training on baby doll circle time.

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

109.9(1)b: All files contain: A signed copy of DHS criminal history record check or any other permission form approved by the Department of public Safety for conducting an Iowa or national criminal history check. A copy of Request for Child Abuse Information. Copies of the results of Iowa records checks conducted. Copies of national criminal history check results. Any Department-issued documents sent to the center related to records check.

Number not in compliance: 1
One staff file reviewed did not contain the results for the Iowa background checks.

109.9(2): All files are updated at least annually and when a change occurs.
Four child files reviewed did not have an annual update.

109.10(11): Smoking and use of tobacco products shall be prohibited in the center and every vehicle used to transport children. Prohibited in outdoor play area during hours of operation. Nonsmoking signs shall be posted at every entrance and in every vehicle used to transport. Signs shall include: Telephone number for reporting complaints .Internet address to DPH.
The vans did not have no smoking signs posted.

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.
Fire and tornado drills were not recorded for the months of May, June and December of 2022.

109.11(3)d: Record of monthly inspections of outdoor recreation area and equipment shall be kept.
The record of monthly inspections of the outdoor recreation area could not be located for the months of May to November of 2022.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Radon testing is now due every five years if testing is under the 4.0 cutoff. The center last completed radon testing in September of 2022 and all rooms fell below the 4.0 cutoff.

The menu's reflect the center is following CACFP guidelines. The center is on the food program. The center has lunch served by the DSM public school district.

The center will pick a month to do annual updates to the child files.

The center's maintenance person conducts and documents the monthly outdoor inspections. The director will speak with the maintenance person about the missing inspections and will ensure these are completed monthly. This is a repeat concern from last year's visit.

The staff file missing the results of the SING check had the waivers completed, however the result page was not in the file. The director will conduct another SING check if the results page cannot be located.

The center will put in no smoking signs in the vehicles.

A new, full, two-year license is recommended.

*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.