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

Name of Center: The Growing Patch Learning Center **Enrollment:** 39 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 48450

Street: 702 Main St **City:** Center Point Iowa **Zip** 52213 **County:** Linn

Mailing Address: 700 South St, Urbana, IA, 52345

Director's Name: Jennifer Liedtke **Phone Number:** 319-343-0472

On-Site Supervisor(s): Nicole Hellberg, Austin Dougherty, Makalia Dircks, Jamee Wiebold **E-Mail:** growingpatch2017@gmail.com

Date(s) of Visit: 06-07-2023

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:** 06-02-2021

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

Date Inspected: 02-22-2023

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: Accredited NAEYC NSACA Other X NA

Program Serves: X Infants (0-23 mo.) X 2 Years X Preschool-Age 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	18	12	10	7	47
Summer					0

QRS Rating: 3

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 08-01-2023 to 08-01-2025
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons **Date:** 06-19-2023

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

Not applicable.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

The Growing Patch Learning Center operates the following two programs throughout the community: The Growing Patch Learning Center (TGPLC) and Growing Patch Summer Camp (GPSC). Specifically, this license is for TGPLC. TGPLC has been in operation since 3/1/2017. TGPLC operates year-round, Monday through Friday from 6:30am to 5:30pm. The program offers childcare to children age infant through school-age. Current enrollment is 39.

Multi-site original founding owner and director is Jennifer Liedtke. Ms. Liedtke has a BS degree in secondary education, has a current State of Iowa teaching license, has over 10 years of experience working with children, and continues to participate in much child development related training. On-site supervisor (assistant director) Nicole Hellberg has over 10 years of experience working with children and continues to participate in much child development related training. On-site supervisor Austin Dougherty has completed 2 years of a 4 year degree in elementary and special education. Mr. Dougherty is a paraeducator with the local school, has over 3 years experience working with children and continues to participate in much child development related training. On-site supervisor Makalia Dircks has been employed by TGPLC since 2018, has child development related training, and continues to participate in much child development related training. On-site supervisor Jamee Wiebold has been employed by TGLP since 2019, has an AS degree in Early Childhood Education and continues to participate in much child development related training.

On 6/7/2023, program space was observed.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

TGPLC and GPSC offer a variety of early learning programming and childcare to help meet the needs of children and families in the community. TGPLC and GPSC are located in predominantly rural areas and accept a variety of funding sources. In March 2023, TGPLC celebrated their 6th year of business. GPSC commenced operations on 5/31/2022 and is currently celebrating staring their 2nd year of business. Congratulations!

TGPLC and GPSC sponsor a social media page for those in the community to learn more about their programs.

The mission of TGPLC and GPSC is "…to provide a safe, developmentally appropriate environment for infants, toddlers, preschool and school-aged children….focus is to provide a stimulating early care and educational experience which promotes each child's social/emotional, physical, and cognitive development…our goal is to support each child's desire to be lifelong learners."

TGPLC participates in quality initiatives including CACFP and IQ4K. Since the last review, TGPLC achieved a IQ4K 3-Star. A certificate of recognition acknowledging the program's support of CPU high school students during the 2022-2023 school-year was observed to be posted in the center's main entryway.

Ms. Liedtke is a local entrepreneur invested in children and the community. Ownership and management (e.g. multi-site owner and director Ms. Liedtke, on-site supervisors) of TGPLC and GPSC has remained consistent. Management is

organized, and in turn, TGPLC and GPSC operate smoothly. The programs have noteworthy systems of organization in place to help ensure administrative items are completed and maintained as required. Management team (e.g. Ms. Liedtke, Nicole Hellberg, Austin Dougherty, Makalia Dircks, Jamee Wiebold) is knowledgeable of licensing guidelines as well as their own program's policies and procedures.

Since the last monitoring visit, the program has retained seasoned staff as well as hired a few new ones. Staff reported celebrating 6 years, 4years, 2 years, and 1 year with TGPLC. Ms. Liedtke reported having several staff with early childhood degrees and having all lead staff trained in PBIS. Ms. Liedtke talked about the program's onboarding of new employees within the first 90 days which includes required trainings as well as training in curriculum and CACFP. Staff professional growth was observed to exceed licensing requirements. Ms. Liedtke reported having 2 staff currently enrolled with TEACH pursuing early childhood degrees. Ms. Liedtke talked about how she is investing in her employees by encouraging professional goals, offering flexible scheduling whenever possible, offering competitive wages/benefits, incorporating a training based pay scale, displaying staff appreciation whenever possible, and having teacher work/professional development days built into the year.

TGPLC and GPSC have emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. The programs successfully navigated through the 2019 Polar Vortex, 8/10/2020 Derecho Storm, 2023 summer air quality issues, and 2019 health (Covid-19) pandemic.

Since the last review, the building continues to receive extremely noteworthy and exceptional replacements and refreshes! Upon arrival, one can enjoy the new seasonal plants/flowers blooming near the main entrance. Inside new flooring, new cabinets, new countertops, updated paint, new diapering areas, new area washable rugs, new windows, and new materials/furnishings continue to be updated throughout all classrooms. Ms. Liedtke reported a goal for classroom remodeling to be finished in fall 2023. Ms. Liedtke talked about additional goals related to replacement of doors. Outdoor play area has also been updated to include new equipment and cushion surfacing! Ms. Liedtke reported a future outdoor goal remains additional fence/wall. Center kitchen is organized, maintained, and sanitary.

Classrooms continue to be arranged in a thoughtful manner with learning at the forefront. Children's accomplishments (e.g. artwork) are displayed in various program areas. Ms. Liedtke discussed how the program began using Creative Curriculum in January 2022 and how the gold assessment component was added in August 2022. Ms. Liedtke talked about how they truly are building a bridge to kindergarten. Ms. Liedtke acknowledged their full-time curriculum coordinator who holds an early childhood degree and helps teachers plan, implement and carry-out curriculum. Curriculum also incorporates off-site field trip experiences (e.g. local dairy farm, local parks/splash pad), on-site guest speaker events (e.g. annual CPU Children's Theater experience, Easter bunny), enrichment activities (e.g. gardening, water days, butter making, butterfly metamorphosis observation), themed days, and holiday/seasonal parties.

TGPLC and GPSC continues efforts at 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.

TGPLC and GPSC collaborate well with community partners including Child Care Resource and Referral, local AEA, local school district, local businesses, city recreational department, and health professionals. Ms. Liedtke discussed their partnership with the local school district. The local school district (by way of school buses) provides transportation for preschool-age children to and from the statewide voluntary 4-year-old preschool program located at the Center Point Elementary School.

TGPLC and GPSC support a safe shoe (closed-toe) policy policy to encourage ease of play both in and outdoors. TGPLC infant room adheres to a "no shoe" policy.

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. This program has policies and procedures in place for hand washing, cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting. Staff were able to verbalize and engage in these processes. Cleaning checklists and daily sanitation reminders were observed to be posted in various areas of the center.

On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were nurturing and attentive to the children's needs. Areas of recent study included robots and sand. Children have access to an array of materials (e.g. books, imaginative play options, building materials, sensory items, crafts, bubbles outdoors) that encourage innovative play. Activities observed were many (e.g. infant cares, outdoor large gross motor play, center play). Staff provided a companionable presence allowing children to have many choices in their play experiences. Routine transitions (e.g. clean up activities) worked smoothly into the program's welcoming and cooperative play environment. Throughout the classrooms, staff were overheard providing children with many words of encouragement and engaging children in much meaningful discussion. Children responded well to staff and appeared to be truly enjoying their day.

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

None noted.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

A full license is issued. 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.