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

Name of Center: Kids Palace - Gowrie **Enrollment:** 16 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 12766

Street: 1019 Market ST **City:** Gowrie Iowa **Zip** 50543 **County:** Webster

Mailing Address: PO BOX 447, Gowrie, IA, 50543

Director's Name: Heather Fisher **Phone Number:** 515-352-5522

On-Site Supervisor(s): Brittany Wilsey **E-Mail:** kidspalace1019@yahoo.com

Date(s) of Visit: 05-17-2024, 05-22-2024

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

Date Inspected: 06-29-2022

Comments : NOTE: The center did purchase a neighboring structure and construction has been completed to renovate that space but an approved fire inspection has not been received for that space. The programming area of that space shall not be occupied until such time that approval from the fire marshal is received.

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 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	12		13	15	40
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

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:** 05-30-2024

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 Kids Palace Childcare Center on 05-17-24, and again on 05-22-24. During the first visit I met with Brittany Wilsey who is the on-site supervisor when Heather is not in. A second visit was made to review administrative records where I met with the center director and owner Heather Fisher. Both are well qualified for the positions the hold based on their extensive experience and on-going training in early childhood care and education. The center is located in the commercial downtown district of Gowrie. The program provides daycare to infants through school age children. There are currently 43 children served by 16 staff. All areas of the center subject to licensing standards were reviewed during this visit.

The general layout and design of the center remains the same as in the prior reports. The center is located a commercial store front building in the downtown main street area of Gowrie and purchased the adjacent building to allow for expansion. With the addition of the adjacent property the center renovated a large classroom for school age programming. There is also a small outdoor area that has been fenced with an infant/toddler playground and a direct access installed from the toddler classroom. The new space has a separate bathroom with one toilet and sink. A large store front window provides light and a view of the outdoors. The space has been renovated so that the front half will be used for programming. There a back room, and two smaller rooms that will be used for storage. During the visit it was observed that the school age children are making use of that space for programming activities but an approved Certificate of Inspection and Occupancy from the fire marshal has not been received. The fire marshal for the center was contacted and confirmed that there was no record of a new inspection of that space. Heather did state that she been granted permission from the previous fire marshal to occupy the space while waiting for the plan review of the renovations made but she was unable to find that e-mail with the approval. It was reviewed that Heather will need to coordinate with the fire marshal and limit programming to those areas previously inspected and approved for use until such time that the fire marshal provides confirmation of approval of the renovated space.

The original programming space remains the same as in prior reports. That space has three primary programming areas serve preschool age children in the main front area, two year old children in a central room connected by a hallway, and a third room at the back of the building provides a separate area for infants. Each room was observed to be clean with only minor issues related to maintenance such as pealing paint and plaster but nothing that presented an immediate safety concern. Bathrooms are located off the connecting hallway for the pre-school and school age children. It is noted that while there are only three toilets and sinks which would allow for a total capacity of 45 children the center capacity is set at 55 which discounts the infant enrollment and reflects the available usable space and capacity of the pre-school and school age rooms. Each room has a window that provides natural light and view, and the classroom located at the front of the building has a large store front window. There is a separate entrance for the infant room which also provides secondary emergency egress for the building. There is a basement which is used as an emergency storm shelter. During the visit several issues were noted for emergency evacuation exits. This included the door to the basement storm shelter being locked, a barrier built around the exit door of the infant room, items being stored under evacuation cribs, and hardware missing on the evacuation crib frames. All exits and equipment used for emergency evacuation must be kept clear of obstruction so that there is clear and ready access, no locks or other restrictions that require secondary action beyond the single operation of the latch mechanism shall be engaged, and equipment must be maintained so that operates easily and

freely without binding or imminent potential for failure. The center had installed a mobile divider fence in the infant room to create separate areas for the mobile and non-mobile infants with a gate that staff were observed to use when passing between the two areas. Each room has a sink in the room in addition to those in restrooms to facilitate handwashing. During the visit the water temperature of handwashing sinks was measured to be 153 deg F. at the spigot. It was reviewed that either the water heater needs to be adjusted or other options such as mechanical mixer valves installed to ensure that hot water temperatures do not exceed 120 deg. F. at the spigot. Each room is divided into activity centers through the placement of furnishing and play structures that are arranged so as not to create any blind areas.

Tall coat cubby shelves had been arranged in the preschool room to create an entry area which did reduce the available floor space for programming. Each activity center was observed to have a good variety of toys and materials that were in good repair and generally appropriate to the ages of the children present. It was observed however that some items and toys with parts that were less than 1 1/4 inches in diameter and 2 1/4 inches in length were present in classrooms with children under 3 years of age. Items of this size are considered choking hazards and need to be removed from children under 3 years of age, and should be kept in storage and brought out for supervised play for children 3-4 years of age. A copy of the daily schedule and planned curriculum were posted. The center uses a weekly learning focus approach with themes for the month and specific learning concepts of letter, numbers, shapes, and colors. During the visits much of the activity was focused on taking the children to the local park where they are allowed to engage in self-directed large motor skill activities. The center did engage in other activities of watching educational videos, and reading books prior to meal service while waiting for children to use the restroom, and lunch service. Good interactions were observed during the visit with the teachers providing supervision of the children and assisting them with their care needs. The center uses a positive behavior management approach with the children using positive recognition/praise, transition activities and routines, redirection, and guided problem solving with the children.

Good health and safety practices and policies were generally observed throughout the center though some practices do need to be reviewed. Changing stations are present in the infant room, and toddler room and a copy of the changing procedures posting was present in both. I was able to observe a diaper change and the staff did follow the posted procedures. Hand washing practices were mixed with staff watching the children to ensure they washed their hands in an effective manner following restroom use. With regard to hand washing prior to meal service the staff in the infant room did not wash the children's hands before serving lunch. The preschool and school classrooms were watching a video while waiting for peers to use the restroom and wash their hands prior to lunch. As children finished in the restroom they would rejoin the group and sit on the floor waiting for the other children. Once all children had used the restroom they then moved to the table for lunch. For those children who returned to sitting on the floor waiting for peers the benefit of washing their hands was negated as each had touched the floor or other items. It was reviewed that the children either need to wash their hands immediately before eating, or should be sent to sit at the table while waiting for peers. Medications, chemical cleaners, personal items, and other materials that could present a safety risk to children were stored in areas where they were not accessible to children. Good safe sleep practices were observed in the infant room for children under 1 year of age. Good spacing of cots was observed to allow separation for reducing the risk of disease transmission, and to allow access for older children. First aid kits were present in the classrooms and a main kit maintained in the kitchen. Taken as whole the center had materials necessary to address most common first aid needs but individual kits should be reviewed and replenished as needed. There were some issues observed with needing to ensure that outlets are covered, and electrical cords are secured so as not be an entanglement risk.

The center has a full kitchen and the program also participates in the Summer Lunch Program that is open to all community members and prepared by the school. Good food storage and handling practices were observed in the kitchen and classrooms. Staff did wear food service gloves and used measured scoops when portioning meals. Meals are served in the classrooms and the teachers do provide supervision at the tables. A menu is posted and provides a good variety of meal options for the children.

The center does have a small toddler playground space behind the new expansion building. The space if fully enclosed by fencing and contains some non-climbing play structures. The center does make use of city facilities such as parks, the pool, and library which are within walking distance. The center did maintain ratio requirements for each age group and adding an additional staff member when leaving for off site activities during the visits.

In reviewing administrative records all required notices were present and in an area readily accessible to parents and visitors. The center uses a combination of an electronic communication and file maintenance application, Brightwheel, and hard copy files to maintain records. This combination is such that it is difficult for the center to track what information is present and current. In reviewing child files the center does have contact information in the digital files but physicals are maintained in a binder. When reviewing child information a review of 8 files was conducted based on children that were identified as being signed in and present at the time. While each had contact information none of the 8 files had a current physical. With regard to staff files these are maintained in hard copy format in a binder and again the center did not have an effective system to track what was present and what was not. A random sample of 6 files were reviewed of those 3 new employees did not have documentation of an Iowa SING check being conducted prior to hire, and current results of national FBI fingerprint based background checks could not be located for any of the employees. In addition 2 were missing a current physical and 3 others were not on the required form and are considered invalid. Inspection logs and certificates

were also an issue. The center did have documentation to show that radon testing had been completed but the sample was rejected by the lab. Heather did have a new test kit and planned to conduct testing over the Memorial Day holiday. The center did not have documentation of fuel burning appliance inspections and this was compounded by the fact that the carbon monoxide detector for the school age side was sounding an alarm which appeared to be caused by a faulty unit where the test button was damaged. With regard to emergency drills the center did not conduct and/or document drills for the months of Nov, Dec 2023, and Jan, Feb, Apr 2024.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The program does have several teachers who have been with the program for a number of years and the staff do appear to work well together and support each other.

Heather did state that she is working to more present at the center.

Heather was very responsive to correcting issues that were identified during the visits taking action to arrange corrections during the time that I was present, and providing an update of corrections that had been completed between the time of the visit and the completion of the licensing report.

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: 3 NOTE: CORRECTED

109.9(1)d: All files contain a pre-employment physical exam report completed within six months prior to hire and at least every three years. Physical exams shall be documented on form 470-5152, Child Care Provider Physical Examination Report.
-- Number not in compliance: 5

109.10(1)a: Preschool (for children five years and younger not enrolled in school): Physical exam report submitted within 30 days of admission, was obtained no more than 12 months prior to admission, is signed by a licensed MD, DO, PA, Chiropractor or ARNP, and contains health history; present health status including allergies, medications, and acute/chronic conditions; and recommendations for continued care if necessary.
-- Number not in compliance: 8

109.10(8): Children’s hand washing: Center shall ensure staff assist children in personal hygiene. For each infant or child with a disability, a separate cloth for washing and one for rinsing may be used in place of running water. Children’s hands shall be washed:Immediately before eating or participating in food service activity.After using the restroom or being diapered.After handling animals.
-- Children's hands were not washed immediately prior to eating lunch for infants. Older children were directed to sit on the floor after washing negating the effects while waiting for peers to wash their hands before lunch service.

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.
-- Documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills was not maintained as required.

109.10(15)d: Daily checks to ensure all exits are unobstructed.
-- Emergency exits, equipment, and shelter access must be maintained clear of obstruction and in good repair at all times. NOTE: PARTIAL CORRECTION

109.11(3)a: Center shall ensure that: Facility and premises are sanitary, safe, and hazard free. Adequate indoor and outdoor space is provided. The outdoor area shall include safe play equipment and area of shade. Sufficient space provided for dining. Sufficient lighting shall be provided. Sufficient ventilation. Sufficient heating. sufficient cooling. Sufficient bathroom and diapering facilities. Equipment, including kitchen appliances, are maintained so as not to result in burns, shock, or injury to children. 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 hot water of hand washing sinks shall not exceed 120 deg. F. when measured at the spigot. NOTE: CORRECTED

109.11(7)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.
-- Documentation not available on the day of the visit. One carbon monoxide detector was damaged and needed to be replaced. NOTE: PARTIAL CORRECTION -- The damaged unit has been replaced.

109.12(4): Sufficient toilet articles are provided for handwashing.Sufficient and safe indoor play equipment, materials, and furniture that conforms with CPSC or ASTM.Play equipment, materials, and furniture meet the developmental, activity, and special needs of the children.Room's arrangement does not obstruct the direct observation of children.Individual covered mats, beds, or cots, and appropriate bedding is provided for all children who nap.Procedures are developed and implemented to maintain equipment and materials in a sanitary manner.Sufficient spacing is maintained between equipment to reduce transmission of disease and allow ease of movement by children and staff to respond to activities and care needs.Sanitary procedures are followed for use and storage of personal hygiene articles.
-- Items and toys with parts less than 1 1/4 inch diameter and 2 1/4 inch length shall be removed from classrooms serving children under 3 years of age.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

A full license will remain in effect at this time. Please provide a written response to the licensing consultant identifying a plan of action to correct and maintain those aspects cited as not meeting licensing standards and identifying an anticipated date of compliance.

NOTE: The programming area of the neighboring structure renovated for use of school age programming shall not be occupied until such time that an approved fire inspection has been issued.

NOTE: A referral has been made to Child Care Resource and Referral to assist the center in developing and implementing a plan of correction to address those issues cited as not being in compliance.

*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.