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

Name of Center: Apple Kids-Cedar Rapids **Enrollment:** 95 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 48222

Street: 1525 Hollywood BLVD NE **City:** Cedar Rapids Iowa **Zip** 52402 **County:** Linn

Mailing Address: 600 10TH AVE, Marion, IA, 52302

Director's Name: Hailey Stone **Phone Number:** 319-363-1539

On-Site Supervisor(s): Hailey Stone **E-Mail:** applekidsnoelridge@gmail.com

Date(s) of Visit: 04-09-2024

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

Date Inspected: 10-25-2023

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 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	12	40	33	101
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

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: Amy Lyons **Date:** 04-16-2024

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

Not applicable.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

Apple Kids has multiple programs throughout the community and has been in operation since 1995. Specifically, Apple Kids - Cedar Rapids opened on 1/2/2017. Apple Kids - Cedar Rapids is a profit program which operates year-round Monday through Friday 6:30am to 5:30pm. The program serves children age infant through school-age. Current enrollment is 95.

The Apple Kids multi-site owner is Kendran Sizemore. Ms. Sizemore started as the Director of Apple Kids in 2001 and then became owner in 2009. Ms. Sizemore has a degree in child and family services, over 23 years of experience working with children and continues to participate in much child development related training. The combined director/on-site supervisor of Apple Kids - Cedar Rapids is Hailey Stone. Ms. Stone has been a director with Apple Kids for over 16 years. Ms. Stone has several years experience working with children and has participated in much child development related training.

On 4/9/2024, program space was observed.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

Apple Kids offers a variety of early learning/childcare programming options to help meet the needs of children and families in the community.

The year 2024 marks the 29th year of Apple Kids providing childcare and early learning services to children and their families throughout the community. Congratulations on celebrating 29 years! Specifically, Apple Kids - Cedar Rapids will be in their 7th year of operations during 2024.

The mission of Apple Kids is "...to provide a safe, nurturing, and fun environment for children ages six weeks to 10 years. Our focus is to provide an encouraging educational experience, promoting social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. Committed to the families we serve, our goal is to give parents complete peace of mind, while being seen as an excellent example of what a quality childcare center should be..."

Apple Kids has the following website for families and persons in the community to learn more about their childcare programs: www.applekidsmarion.com.

Apple Kids has a history of participating in quality initiatives including local quality initiatives. Ms. Stone discussed several quality related goals including applying for and participating in CACFP and IQ4K.

Multi-site owner Ms. Sizemore is a local entrepreneur invested in the community. Ownership and management of Apple Kids - Cedar Rapids has remained consistent since opening over 7 years ago. This includes combined director/on-site supervisor Hailey Stone. It shall be noted that at times, Apple Kids - Marion on-site supervisor Jason Snitko assists at this location at times. Mr. Snitko has been the Apple Kids - Marion on-site supervisor since 2018. Mr. Snitko has a BA in marketing and a teaching credential and over 7 years of experience working with children. The Apple Kids management

team is knowledgeable of licensing guidelines as well as their own program's policies and procedures. The management team is organized and has noteworthy systems of organization in place to help ensure administrative items are completed as required and maintained in a secure manner. As a result, the program experiences smooth daily operations. Ms. Stone discussed the collaboration that continues among all Apple Kids sites to share materials, curriculum, joys, challenges, ideas/planning, and floating staff when needed. Ms. Stone shared how since 2019, the day-to-day operations have been as huge part of the program's success story.

Since the last monitoring visit, the program has retained many seasoned staff as well as hired some new staff. A core group of the program's staff has been employed with Apple Kids even prior to this site opening in 2017. Staff reported celebrating 20 years, 14 years 3, years, and 1 year employment with Apple Kids. Annual staff professional development days, continuous acknowledgment of staff appreciation, monetary incentives, and flexible scheduling remain part of the program's successful operations. A "Meet Our Staff" display celebrating staff longevity is visible upon entering the building. Ms. Stone reported "...not just having a fully staffed center but a second family to these kids and in some aspects amazing mentors..."

Apple Kids - Cedar Rapids has emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. Apple Kids sites have successfully navigated through the Linn County 2008 Flood, 2019 Polar Vortex, 8/10/2020 Derecho Storm, 2019 health (COVID 19) pandemic, 2021 food/supply-demand issues, 2022 infant formula shortages and 2023 air quality challenges.

Apple Kids - Cedar Rapids 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. Ms. Stone talked about the positive feedback they continue to receive from families including family retention and displays of gratitude.

Building and grounds are well-maintained. Apples Kids has a maintenance person to assist with building repairs. The kitchen is spacious and sanitary. In 2021, Culligan Water System/Station was established in lieu of use of the water fountains. Since the last review, classroom furnishings, carpets and materials continue to be updated. Outdoor areas were also updated to include an outdoor sports plex (e.g. basketball court, attachable volleyball), additional areas of shade, toddler resurfacing and fence/gate repairs. Ms. Stone discussed applying for and receiving grants. A recent garden grant has helped Apple Kids establish an enormous, fully enclosed outdoor garden experience incorporating many raised garden beds. Ms. Stone talked about how they will be incorporating fresh "home-grown" fruits and vegetables which are planted, nurtured and harvest by the children enrolled with their program. As part of this grant, Apple Kids also obtained indoor gardening materials including indoor seedling greenhouses, stack-and-grow seed starters with lights, and hydrophonic growing systems. It shall be noted - the sweet aroma of the sprouting plants could be smelled throughout the lower level school-age area! Ms. Stone discussed how seeds had been started over spring break and how they are now very close to needing to be transplanted to their outdoor garden beds. Ms. Stone also reported obtaining NAPSACC grant to help increase outdoor large gross motor play equipment

Classrooms continue to be arranged in a thoughtful manner with learning at the forefront. Children's accomplishments (e.g. artwork; clever butterfly milestone feet!, Sunshine handprints, unique "You are my jam toast" handrpints!) are displayed in various areas of the program space. Apple Kids - Cedar Rapids curriculum includes a combination of learning strategies incorporating teacher-inspired ideas, phonics work, math concepts, small and large gross motor, imaginative play experiences, and crafts. Curriculum also incorporates off-site field trip experiences, on-site guest speaker events, themed days, holiday/seasonal parties, parent/teacher conferences, and occasional parent night out events. Communication between children and staff is done verbally, with picture cues, and through sign language. Ms. Stone discussed how staff continue to put hard work and love into each child's experience at Apple Kids.

Apple Kids - Cedar Rapids collaborates well with community agencies including the local school districts, health professionals, and various local businesses. Ms. Stone acknowledged the strong relationship specifically with Wright Elementary School which is part of the Cedar Rapids Community School District. Ms. Stone talked about their close proximity/walking distance of the school and their center's ability to provide full and/or part-time childcare to so many of their students. Ms. Stone discussed how Apple Kids - Cedar Rapids does provide transportation and/or walking services of 4-year-old preschool children to Wright Elementary School for statewide voluntary preschool programing.

The infant room has a “no shoe” policy and supports safe sleep practices.

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 as well as policies and procedures in place for hand washing, diapering, cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing.

On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were nurturing and attentive to the children's needs. Activities observed were many (e.g. infant cares, group circle discussion with book reading, music with movement and instruments, center play experiences). Children had access to an array of materials (e.g. books, imaginative play options, building materials, crafts)

that encouraged innovative play. Staff provided a companionable presence allowing children to have many choices in their play experiences. Staff were observed to communicate with the children verbally, with picture cards, and through sign language. Routine transitions (e.g. 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 fostering the use of social graces. 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:

Ensure updated health information (AF, AF) is placed into each respective file upon receipt.

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.