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

Name of Center: Storm Lake Early Childhood Center **Enrollment:** 114 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 32605

Street: 525 Oates St **City:** Storm Lake Iowa **Zip** 50588 **County:** Buena Vista

Mailing Address: PO Box 519, Graettinger, IA, 51342

Director's Name: Irene Mayland **Phone Number:** 712-732-1358

On-Site Supervisor(s): Deanna Reed **E-Mail:** imayland@udmo.com dhelget@udmo.com

Date(s) of Visit: 10-18-2024

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

LICENSING VISITS

New Application X **Re-Application** **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: 08-21-2024

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 X NAEYC NSACA Other NA

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

Get-Well Evening Care Special Needs

SCHEDULE: Year-round X School-Year Summer Only

HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General		40	160		200
Summer					0

QRS Rating: 2

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 12-01-2024 to 12-01-2026
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Raymond Salsbury **Date:** 10-28-2024

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

NA

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

An unannounced annual visit was made to the Storm Lake Early Childhood Center on 10-18-24 where I met with the on-site supervisor Deanna Reed. Deanna is well qualified for the position based on her education, experience, and on-going training. The center operates in a collaborative agreement with the Storm Lake School District as part of the Storm Lake Early Childhood Campus where programming is provided by the Early Head Start, Head Start, and the school district to preschool and special needs children. The program serves children 2 - 5 years of age. There are currently 114 children enrolled in the program. All aspects of the program subject to licensing standards were reviewed.

The physical facilities and layout of the program remain the same as in prior years. There are two buildings located on a common property that comprise the Early Learning Campus and are identified as the East Elementary, and Gingerbread House buildings. The Head Start program consolidated all classes to the Gingerbread House building at the start of the 2023 school year. All of the classrooms were observed to be clean with only minor maintenance issues noted such as peeling paint and rusting/pitting of exit doors but none that rose to the level of being an immediate safety concern. Each room has windows along the exterior walls that provide natural light. a view of the outdoors, and ventilation. Each classroom has secondary exit doors with most providing direct access to the outdoors and others connecting to another classroom that has a direct exterior exit. The program uses the secondary exit as the primary entry for each classroom. All exits had both written and diagram instructions for fire and tornado evacuation, were clear of obstruction, and opened easily and freely. Each classroom has sinks available in the classrooms to facilitate hand washing. Each classroom has restroom facilities directly accessible from the classroom. Each classroom has storage areas where additional toys and materials are kept along with those things that would pose a safety risk such as cleaning agents and small play items that would require supervision for younger children. Each room has a variety of activity centers that are created through the placement of furniture, shelving, and play structures. The activity centers are arranged so that they provide the children with room to play and do not create any blind areas.

The available activity centers include options such as reading, large/small manipulatives, art/crafts, puzzles, math, science, media, large group, and dramatic play. Each activity center had a good variety of toys and materials that were observed to be appropriate to the ages of the children present and in good repair. Each classroom has a posted daily schedule and curriculum. Each classroom develops a separate learning focus for their curriculum but were generally similar with recurring themes such as Pumpkins, or Fall. The books, play materials, and other items did reflect or support the posted curriculum in the classrooms. Good interactions were observed during the time of my visit. All staff were observed to be actively engaged with the children either playing with them, or presenting the planned curriculum. When on the playground staff were positioned in different areas to ensure that all children were within direct line of sight and sound of a teacher at all times. The center does use positive behavior management techniques such as using transition cues, recognizing positive behaviors, redirecting children to appropriate activities, and guided problem solving. When speaking and interacting with the children all teacher used calm and encouraging tones of voice.

Good health and safety procedures are in place throughout the center. Each classroom maintains a first aid kit in the room, and a larger supply is maintained in the office. The program has a nurse who is available on-site. The teachers also took a first aid kit with them when going outside to the playground. Good medication policies and procedures are in place with

regard to authorization, storage, administration, and documentation of medications. Good hand washing, and cleaning practices were generally observed. One issue that was observed in one classroom was a child that had used a restroom but had not washed his hands afterward. It was not until after Diane who was accompanying me during the visit commented on the need for the child to do so that the staff directed the child to wash his hands. As noted each classroom does have restrooms directly accessible from the room, and additional sinks in the classroom. It is recommended that the center consider a practice of having the children use the sink in the classroom rather than the restroom for hand washing which can allow staff to monitor and ensure that children wash their hands and do so in an effective manner. When cleaning tables and other equipment the teachers would wait until children were not in the immediate area before using chemical cleaners. The center did have several children that had identified allergies and a response plan was present for those children that needed them.

The center does have full kitchen facilities and meals are prepared on site. Menus are posted and does identify a good variety of credible meal options. Good food storage and handling practices were observed in the kitchen, but food storage in classrooms was an issue. Each classroom was observed to have some limited food items present whether snacks for the children, snacks for the staff, or items for use in activities. It was reviewed that all food items whether intended for child consumption or not must be placed in air tight sealable food grade containers once the original packaging seal has been broken. This will help to reduce the risk of spoilage, and being an attractant to insects and rodents. The program makes use of a larger cafeteria setting with trestle tables for lunch service. Each class sits at separate tables and meal service is staggered so that each class eats at different times. Meals are served family style with the children serving themselves and the teachers providing assistance as needed. The teachers did sit and eat with the children to provide supervision at the tables, and model good eating habits.

The center has a large playground area located between the two buildings, and several smaller playground spaces surrounding the Gingerbread House building. The main playground between the two buildings has several play areas including two climbing structures, a swing area, an open natural play area, and a toddler play area. The center is currently using only one of the large climbing structures identified as "The Brown" structure. The equipment was in good repair but the pea gravel used for fall surfacing beneath the structure had developed a hard pan layer. This either needs to be aerated or supplemented with additional material to ensure a proper depth of fall surfacing. As noted there are several smaller play spaces around the Gingerbread House. Each of these areas is fenced and accessed through a gate, and the secondary exit for the individual classrooms, and is separated by fencing to provide individual play areas for each classroom. Each of these areas contain a variety of ground based play structures that do not require any fall surfacing. All materials were appropriate to the ages of the children that attend the center and were in good repair. Each has a paved sidewalk that provides access from the entrance to the gates and it was noted that the ground has settled along the edges creating a limited tripping hazard. This should be addressed either by adding dirt to make a level transition, or use of a high visibility paint along the edge to denote the transition point. There is also a toddler play area next to the school building which uses foam tiles for fall surfacing. Several mature trees and the buildings provide shade.

All required notices were posted in an area that was readily visible and accessible to all visitors in both buildings. Staff files are reviewed separately at the program main office and any concerns are addressed during that review with central office personnel. Children's files are maintained in electronic format using ProCare, and copies of emergency contact cards are maintained in each classroom. All child files were current and contained all required documentation. All inspection logs and certificates were current and available.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The program is also accredited by NAEYC, and participating the IQ4K program which seek to implement best practice recommendations.

The center does have plans to update the facilities with a new front door, and flooring in the toddler classrooms after having been awarded funds from a grant.

As noted this program makes use of positive behavior supports to reduce the occurence of negative behaviors and the teachers do an excellent job of implementing those practices. One example that was observed was a classroom where a teacher was engaged in a small group art/craft activity with several children and one child shared a copy of an art project. When another child commented that what the child drew did not look what they said it did the teacher supported the child that did the project by validating that it was how that child that did the project saw it and that it is ok that we all see things differently and use our imaginations.

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

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 fall surfacing beneath the climbing structure of the outdoor playground has developed a hard pan layer and children need to be restricted from using that structure until the material has been aerated or supplemented to ensure a proper depth of fall surfacing. The transitions between paved sidewalks and grassy areas should also either be leveled or defined using a high visibility paint to denote transitions and reduce the risk of tripping.

109.15(5)b: Sanitary and safe methods in food preparation, serving, and storage sufficient to prevent transmission of disease, infestation, and spoilage are followed.Staff preparing food that have injuries on hands wear protective gloves.Staff serving food use clean serving utensils and have clean hands/wear protective gloves.
-- Food items stored in classrooms were not properly stored. All foods whether intended for child consumption or not must be stored in air tight sealable food grade containers once the initial packaging seal has been broken to reduce the risk of spoilage and being an attractant to insects and rodents.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

A full license is recommended 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. At least one visit will be made to the center during the next year.

*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.