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

Name of Center: Mount Vernon Community Preschool **Enrollment:** 39 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 25093

Street: 304 1st ST W **City:** Mount Vernon Iowa **Zip** 52314 **County:** Linn

Mailing Address: 304 1ST W, Mount Vernon, IA, 52314

Director's Name: Ellen Mueller **Phone Number:** 319-895-6286

On-Site Supervisor(s): Ellen Mueller **E-Mail:** mvcommunitypreschool@gmail.com

Date(s) of Visit: 11-06-2024

Licensing Visit X **Unannounced Visit** X **Off Year Visit** **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: 12-11-2023

Comments :

LICENSE TYPE: **Child Care** X **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: Infants (0-23 mo.) 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			60		60
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 12-01-2023 to 12-01-2025
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons **Date:** 12-05-2024

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

Not applicable.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

Mount Vernon Community Preschool has been in operation for 58 years. The not for profit and non-faith based preschool is located inside the United Methodist Church. Mt. Vernon Preschool operates school-year only Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 11:00am. The program serves preschool-age children. Current enrollment is 39.

Ms. Mueller has been the director of the Mount Vernon Community Preschool since May, 2020. Ms. Mueller has a BA degree in elementary education, over 8 years of experience working with children, and continues to participate in much child development related training.

On 11/6/2024, program space was observed.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

Mount Vernon Community Preschool is a well established program offering a choice of preschool services to help meet the educational needs of families and children. Mount Vernon Community Preschool has been in operation since 1965 and is currently celebrating their 59th year of operations. Congratulations!

Mount Vernon Community Preschool has the following website: https://umcmv.com/children-and-youth/preschool/. The preschool also sponsors a private social media page for enrolled families.

Mount Vernon Community Preschool has a long history of participating in quality initiatives including local quality initiatives. Prior awards include a certificate for cooperation with Linn County Health Department by conducting a lead screening clinic at their facilities and a certificate for cooperation with Linn County Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program in promoting the health of Linn County children.

Ownership and management of the program has remained consistent. Ms. Mueller is celebrating her 4th full year as director of this program. Ms. Mueller is a director-member of NAEYC. Ms. Mueller is organized, and in turn, the program experiences smooth daily operations. Ms. Mueller has noteworthy systems of organization in place to help ensure administrative items to be completed as required and maintained in a confidential manner. Staff are aware of licensing rules as well as their own program's policies and procedures.

Mount Vernon Community Preschool continues to retain seasoned staff. All teachers have degrees in child development, education and/or special education. Each teacher also has additional experience either teaching in a school and/or other learning center. Staff reported celebrating 22 years and 4 years experience working with children. Staff longevity is impressive! Also, staff's passion for being able to provide early learning is clearly evidenced in the impressive implementation of daily lesson planning. Ms. Mueller discussed having a great appreciation for their early learning team acknowledging how they often complete trainings together.

Mount Vernon Community Preschool is a mission of the United Methodist Church and is located in the education wing of

the United Methodist Church. In 2023, there were noteworthy, significant and very nice updates to the education wing including preschool classrooms. The preschool operates under a board of directors and has a parent advisory council. Church administration and the board help ensure the children's space is sanitary and hazard free each day. Ms. Mueller discussed how the church does include the preschool in their newsletter and how the partnership has and continues to flourish.

Mount Vernon Community Preschool has emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. The preschool successfully navigated through the 2008 historic Linn County flood, 2019 winter Polar Vortex, 2019 health (covid-19) pandemic, 8/10/20 Derecho Storm, 2021 food supply issues, 2022 infant formula shortages, 2023 air quality alerts and 7/19/24 global technology outage.

Mt. Vernon Community Preschool continues efforts at optimal communication between the program/staff and families. The program has an organized parent-staff/program information center, offers regular program newsletters, utilizes technological communication resources, and supports family programming activities. Ms. Mueller discussed continued efforts to be able to offer some scholarship opportunities. Ms. Mueller talked about having a great group of families, with some traveling a distance for their children to be able to attend their preschool.

The Mount Vernon Community Preschool offers a variety of program/family events throughout each school-year including preschool orientation for families and children, parent-teacher conferences, fall party with local business trick-or-treating, Valentine exchange, preschool at the pumpkin patch day, and story time at Cole Library excursions. Evidence of one family activity was observed to have resulted in the creation of a "Proud Parent Binder" celebrating each preschool child!

Building and grounds are well-maintained. Classrooms continue to be arranged in a thoughtful manner with learning at the forefront. Materials are accessible to children. The program has access to a plethora of unique supplies culminated from years of passionate teaching! It's clear materials are regularly and purposefully rotated (even snack choices) to encourage the most clever and enjoyable learning experiences! Curriculum happens through play, is individualized, and is based upon each child's unique learning style. Curriculum incorporates literacy, science and math investigation activities (e.g. cooking activities, letter recognition writing) and also supports music which encourages rhythm, movement and singing.

Mt. Vernon Community Preschool partners well with community agencies, local businesses, various school districts, local higher education entities, CCR&R and health professionals. Ms. Mueller discussed a collaboration with the Lions Club to be able to offer vision screenings. The preschool has also been featured in the Mount Vernon - Lisbon Sun local newspaper highlighting preschool events and unique offerings.

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

On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were nurturing and attentive to the children's needs. Activities offered to peak child interest were many including individual "yellow" easel painting, fine motor lacing leaves, large gross motor low-to-ground balancing work, book reading on the comfy couch, puff ball exploring, and imaginative play (e.g. farm creating, train racing, dramatic kitchen play). Small group rug time occurred in each room that included spirited book reading (e.g. Where the Wild Things Are, Barn Dance) with each group of children asking questions and discussing book events as each story unfolded. Many one-on-one teacher-student interactions were observed that included warm discussions as to what each was accomplishing, offering reassurances with hugs and encouraging social graces. Routine transitions (e.g. clean up activities, skilled snack rituals) worked smoothly into the program's welcoming and cooperative play environment. Staff provided a companionable presence allowing children to have many choices in their preschool day. 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:

Please forward results from the annual fuel inspection upon receipt.

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.