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

Name of Center: Growing Patch Summer Camp **Enrollment:** 26 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 51812

Street: 202 W Main ST **City:** Urbana Iowa **Zip** 52345 **County:** Benton

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; Kandice Dircks; Shayla Slager **E-Mail:** growingpatch2017@gmail.com

Date(s) of Visit: 06-12-2024

X **Licensing Visit** X **Unannounced Visit** **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: 03-31-2022

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

Get-Well Evening Care Special Needs

SCHEDULE: Year-round School-Year X Summer Only

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General				50	50
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 08-01-2024 to 08-01-2026
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons **Date:** 07-01-2024

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 GPSC located inside Center Point Urbana Middle School which is part of the Center Point Community School District. The profit program commenced operations at this site on 5/31/2022. GPSC operates summer only, Monday through Friday 6:30am to 5:30pm. GPSC operates 11 weeks (6/3/24 to 8/16/24) during summer 2024. The program offers childcare to school-age children. Current enrollment is 26.

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 several 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 experience working with children, 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-site supervisor Kandice Dircks has been employed by TGPLC since 2021, has experience working with children and continues to participate in much child development related training. On-site supervisor Shayla Slager has been employed by TGPLC since 2022, has experience working with children and continues to participate in much child development related training.

On 6/12/2024, 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 2024, TGPLC celebrated their 7th year of business. GPSC commenced operations on 5/31/2022 and is currently celebrating their 3rd 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. TGPLC achieved IQ4K 3-Star. The program has

historically been recognized for their support of CPU high school students. Ms. Liedtke discussed quality initiatives related to this 12-week summer only site.

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, Kandice Dircks) 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 7 years and 1 year with TGPLC. Ms. Liedtke reported having several staff with early childhood degrees and having all lead staff trained in PBIS. The program supports onboarding of new employees within the first 90 days which includes the required trainings as well as training in curriculum and CACFP. Documentation reviewed indicates staff professional growth continues to exceed licensing requirements. The program utilities TEACH. 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 winter Polar Vortex, 2019 health (covid-19) pandemic, 8/10/20 Derecho Storm, 2021 food supply issues, 2022 infant formula shortages and 2023 air quality alerts.

GPSC has a collaborative partnership with the school district. School custodial staff, school administration, school nurse, and school food service personnel help ensure the children's space is sanitary and hazard free each day. The school kitchen is inspected at least annually by the health department. Since the last review, the program no longer needs to cater foods served to this site from their main location. GPSC has access to the school kitchen to prepare, store and serve foods. There is an AED on-site. Historically, GPSC has partnered with the CPU school district for swimming lessons and summer school activities as needed. Management and staff talk favorably about the program's continued relationship with the school describing it as "excellent".

GPSC's primary space is located inside the school cafeteria and two classrooms. GPSC regularly also has access to the indoor school gymnasium for large gross motor activities even on inclement weather days. Curriculum is described as invigorating and teacher-inspired with a balance of physical, creative, and fun-filled activities in a relaxing and nurturing environment. Daily schedule supports small group work, outdoor learning, journaling/literacy, and time for children to display field trip thank-you. Curriculum also incorporates off-site field trip experiences (e.g. local baseball game, nature center, local bowling, roller skating, picnics in the park), on-site guest speaker events (e.g. CPU Theater Camp, master gardeners, recycling personnel), enrichment activities (e.g. gardening, math, literacy, crafts), and themed days.

Specific 2024 summer theme is "The World and Us". Each child has a science lab coat and protective science experiment gear (e.g. googles, magnifying glasses). Each week unique science experiments (e.g. egg drop, mentos with Coke, live volcanos) are incorporated into small group work, group games, cook experiences, and crafts. Staff talked about emphasizing that each day is a new day to start fresh with no mistakes which promotes child creativity and participation. Ms. Liedtke indicated children are going home each day talking with their families about the experiments and projects they are working on each day which has fostered much positive family feedback.

GPSC continues efforts at optimal communication between the program/staff and families. The program is establishing an organized parent-staff/program information center, has a place to display children's accomplishments (including artwork) for families to enjoy, offers regular program newsletters, utilizes technological communication resources, and supports family programming activities. An upcoming Puddle Jumpers fundraiser was noted.

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.

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.

On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were nurturing and attentive to the children's needs. Staff were observed warmly greeting children and families upon arrival. Activities observed were many (e.g. pipe cleaner science, outdoor large gross motor play). Staff provided a companionable presence allowing children to have many choices in their play experiences. Routine transitions (e.g. clean up activities, breakfast rituals) 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 encouraging the use of social graces. Very clever creative and use of "camp cash",

"Little Potatoes" and busy box from home! 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.