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

Name of Center: Apple Tree Early Child Center **Enrollment:** 105 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 51852

Street: 1070 7th AVE NE **City:** Sioux Center Iowa **Zip** 51250 **County:** Sioux

Mailing Address: 1070 7th AVE NE, Sioux Center, IA, 51250

Director's Name: Melinda Eeekhoff **Phone Number:** 712-722-8270

On-Site Supervisor(s): Jessica Vermulen **E-Mail:** director.ecc@appletreechildcare.com

Date(s) of Visit: 01-24-2023

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

LICENSING VISITS

X **New Application** **Re-Application** **NA**

Signed Application (470-0722) Received X **Yes** **No** **NA** **Date Signed:** 06-14-2022

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

Date Inspected: 06-09-2022

Comments : The program changed to new owners on 06-27-22 and the center name changed from Early Childhood Center to Appletree Early Learning Center. License changed from 06-14-22 to 02-01-24. Capacity remained at 235.

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	65	24	75	71	235
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 06-14-2022 to 02-01-2024
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Jana Drew **Date:** 01-26-2023

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

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

Visited Early Childhood Center on 01-24-23 and spoke with Melinda Eekhof director. On 06-27-22, the center changed to new owners and the center name changed from Early Childhood Center to Appletree Early Learning Center. Melinda Eekhoff remained as the director, however, Lisa Jasper resigned. There were no other changes to the center. Capacity remained at 235. Jessica Vermulen is also the new onsite supervisor.

Ms Eekhoff has an elementary education degree and thirty years of experience working with children. Early Childhood Center is housed in a building that was built specifically for childcare located in Sioux Center. The center has 7 rooms providing care for children 2-5 years old and 3 rooms with infants. The program serves children from infants to school age. The center operates Monday through Friday 6am to 6pm. Due to change in ownership the program no longer does continuity of care program.

There are 105 children enrolled in the program. The center continues in following all guidelines put forth by DHS regarding the corona-virus and
doing everything they can to support their staff and families. The center has been cleaning toys that children use. Sufficient amount of toys and equipment for the number of children. Daily schedule of activities were posted. Displayed throughout the room were colors, shapes, picture schedule for the children, job chart, children's artwork and the alphabet. Observed staff assisting children with a variety of activities, talking to the children throughout the visit, leading the children in exercise, reminding the children about rules, and engaging the children in activities. The center utilizes High Scope Curriculum and Gold assessments. The program has applied for grants to help in updating surfacing on the playground and outside toys. The program offers 3 year old preschool program to where the preschool uses a room specific to preschool. The program is looking at childcare kids that will do 3 year old preschool to remain in their own room in the fall. If there are children in the community that only want preschool then they will continue to use the current 3 year old preschool room for those children.

The one year old room had the following areas throughout this room for the children to explore and learn: dolls, cars, kitchen, books and toys. The room has a variety of toys in the storage area that they rotate into the room. Sufficient amount of toys and equipment for the number of children. Changing tables are accessible in the room. Child size furniture throughout the area. Observed staff assisting children at mealtime. Staff had good interaction with the children.

The infant rooms 6weeks to 8 months and 8 months to18 months. The center has the following areas throughout these rooms for the children to explore and learn: blocks, toys, books and mirrors. Sufficient amount of toys and equipment for the number of children. Colorful room. Room has changing tables and handwashing sinks. In all of the infant rooms the staff interacted in a positive manner with the infants.

Center Nutrition Practices Observed
Nutritious meals are prepared onsite in a kitchen that is inaccessible to the children. Refrigerators are clean and kept at the appropriate temperature. Good food storage practices were observed. The center follows the CACFP guidelines for

nutrition, however, currently are not on the CACFP program. With the change in ownership cancelled their QRS program and the program needs to reapply for the IQ4K program and reapply for the food program. The program does provide meals to the Headstart and Early Headstart programs which those programs remain on the food program as they are a separate license. Menus were posted.

Center Health & Safety
Medication is stored in a lock box or out of reach of the children. Center follows proper guidelines for administering medication. Tables are sanitized prior to children eating. Observed good hand washing procedures by staff and children. First aid kit is sufficient to treat minor injuries. Fire/tornado drills are documented each month. Radon test and annual heating inspections are complete. Good sanitary procedures are followed. Center has a functioning carbon monoxide detector. All program areas were observed to be clean and well maintained. Good health and safety policies /procedures are in place. Center has Emergency Preparedness plan, however should be updated.

Center Playground
The center has a very large fenced-in playground adjacent to the building. Surfacing material is around all of the equipment on the playground which was replaced from woodchips to poured rubber. The program switched to the new surfacing in the spring/summer of 2022. Due to inclement weather the playground was not able to be viewed and will be looked at another date. Monthly playground inspection is completed. Shade is available on the playground. The playground has slides, climbing equipment, swings, playhouse and tricycles.

Center Transportation Arrangements/Field Trips
The center does not transport the children. However, the school agers may go for walks.

The center continues to work hard at retention of staff. The center tries to have quarterly staff meetings. The center has good relationship with their children and families. They
follow the high-scope curriculum. Center also has staff who utilize the wages program.

Goals: The center was on QRS level of 4 out of 5. Due to the change in ownership they have lost the QRS program and will be working on the IQ4K program that has replaced the QRS program. They are also doing performance measures for staff accountability. Each room has a staff support that is in charge of their room and with staff. If staff calls
in then they work with them on finding a replacement. To continue to improve with staff communications with staff meetings. To obtain more staff. The program is looking at doing 3 year old preschool in the classroom rather than transition to another room for preschool.

Strengths of the center is that they have a good core staff and that the center has a good relationship with parents, children. The center is also very organized. The program has staff that have been with the previous center and has stayed with the new owners for more than 5 years.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The preschool room sends home a newsletter each month to keep parents aware of what is going on in the program.

Children's toys are at their level and accessible.

The preschool has parent/teacher conferences two times a year to inform parents of their child's progress and what they need to work on.

The other rooms (infant to age five) have conferences once a year.

Display children’s art work in the rooms.

Center has child size furniture in all the rooms.

Staff have very positive interactions with the children.

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

109.7(1): All staff(within first 3 months of employment)Two hours of approved training FOR the mandatory reporting of child abuse. At least one hour of training regarding universal precautions and infectious disease control. Certification in American Red Cross, American Heart Association, American Safety and Health institute or MEDIC First Aid infant, child, and adult cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) OR equivalent certification approved by the department. A valid certificate

indicating the date of training and expiration date shall be maintained. Certification in infant, child, and adult first aid that uses a nationally recognized curriculum or is received from a nationally recognized training organization including the American Red Cross ,American Heart Association, American Safety and Health Institute or MEDIC First Aid or an equivalent certification approved by the department. A valid certificate indicating the date of training and expiration date shall be maintained. Minimum health and safety trainings, approved by the Department. If significant changes occur to content, the Department may require the training be renewed.
A couple of staff were missing essential trainings which needed to be completed within the first 90 days of hire.

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: 1

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended to update Emergency Preparedness policies with new ownership. It is also recommended that Melinda and Jessica review the checklist as a tool and do a self audit of their program.

The center will email consultant confirming that all aspects that fall below standards has been corrected by 02-28-23.

A full license will remain in effect at this time.

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.

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