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

Name of Center: Linn County Child Development Center **Enrollment:** 63 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 24425

Street: 1020 6th St SE **City:** Cedar Rapids Iowa **Zip** 52401 **County:** Linn

Mailing Address: 1020 6th ST SE, Cedar Rapids, IA, 52401

Director's Name: Gloria Witzberger **Phone Number:** 319-892-5700

On-Site Supervisor(s): Colette Stocks **E-Mail:** gloria.witzberger@linncounty.org

Date(s) of Visit: 03-05-2024

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

Date Inspected: 11-07-2023

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: 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	78	6	100
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 04-01-2024 to 04-01-2026
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons **Date:** 03-21-2024

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

Not applicable.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

The Linn County Child Development Center (LCCDC) has been in operation since 1969. In November 2019, this program relocated to their current building which houses other community partners including public health. The Linn County Child Development Center offers full and half day early childhood programs for children ages 2 to 5. Current enrollment is 63.

The program's director is Gloria Witzberger. Ms. Witzberger has been the director since 2016. Ms. Witzberger has a MS degree in social counseling and a BA degree in psychology. Ms. Witzberger has been the director of the Linn County Family and Community Health Alliance for over 15 years and has over 20 years of experience working with children. On-site supervisor Colette Stocks has been employed with LCCDC for over 25 years. Ms. Stocks as a BA degree in elementary education with an early childhood education endorsement and much experience working with children.

On 3/5/2024, program space was observed.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

LCCDC was established in 1969 in response to a need for full day child development services for working families on limited incomes. While the program's primary mission is to serve limited-income families and children with special needs, the program does accept a variety of funding. LCCDC is located in a predominantly urban area and provides a multitude of early learning options (e.g. full-time and part-time care) to help meet the needs of families and children throughout the community. During 2024, LCCDC is celebrating their 55th year of providing early learning services to the community!

LCCDC has the following website for families and persons in the community to learn more about their program: https://www.linncounty.org/129/Child-Development-Center.

LCCDC has a history of participation in quality initiatives including local quality initiatives, CACFP, and QRS. In 1990, LCCDC was one of first childcare centers in the state of Iowa to be accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The program continues to be NAEYC accredited (renewal due 4/1/2029).

LCCDC is part of the Linn County Child and Youth Development Department and operates under a board of directors.

Ownership and management of LCCDC has remained consistent. The management team (e.g. Ms. Witzberger, Ms. Stocks) 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 (e.g. Excel program) 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.

Since the last monitoring visit, the program has retained seasoned staff and is fully staffed. Several staff reported celebrating 30 years, 26 years, 22 years, 17 years, 7 years and 1 year with LCCDC. Staff longevity is impressive! All lead teachers have Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education with endorsements in special education. Assistant teachers have BA degree, AA degree or a CDA. Documentation supports staff participate in annual professional growth hours that

exceed minimum guidelines. LCCDC has partnerships with the TEACH program and a business plan which rewards and celebrates staff success including on-going education and professional goals.

LCCDC has much community support. Over the last several years, the program has applied for and received many awards and grants (e.g. Community Garden project, Corridor Pet Therapy Dogs, Hy-Vee garden project, Farm to ECE, Rockwell grant/UNI for STEM/science learning, Theisen's grant for food vouchers to assist families with food insecurity, friends of LCCDC grants, Shared Visions grant, Linn County Early Childhood Iowa Board funding).

LCCDC collaborates well with community partners. These community partners include local school districts, local businesses, ECI, family support workers, head start, local food pantries, ISU, Quota Club and Linn County Board of Supervisors. The program has a history of partnering with others to provide on-site parenting classes, family/holiday/food boxes and translation services.

LCCDC has emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. LCCDC successfully navigated through the 2008 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 and 2023 air quality alerts.

LCCDC 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. LCCDC has an active parent advisory board and monthly parent meetings. LCCDC has an on-site lending and gifting books library.

Building and grounds are well-maintained. Since the last visit, the program obtained an outdoor adaptive swing and a new outdoor storage shed with the goal of adding another one. Each child now also has their own bike helmet. Staff shall be commended for their ingenuity of storing each child's bike helmet separately and in a sanitary manner! LCCDC does have a custodial person and a maintenance person assisting with building repairs. Kitchen is commercial style, spacious and sanitary. Center culinary chefs reported being employed by LCCDC for 10 years and 4 years. Both talked about being ServSafe Certified, their continued menu planning and food preparation efforts, and their joy of providing daily culinary delights to the children. Floors are heated. Rolling outdoor carts for individual water access and first-aid supplies are established. Children and staff have access to a large indoor gymnasium, small indoor gross motor room, on-site kitchenette, areas of increased storage, and much natural light. The outdoor play area includes a hill slide, outdoor musical instruments, and areas for seating. Since the last review, classrooms obtained garden boxes. An ongoing literacy, science and gardening project know as "What's happening to the pumpkin?" was observed in one classroom watching the life cycle of their very own "Pumpkin Jack"!

Classrooms continue to be arranged in a thoughtful manner with learning at the forefront. Children's accomplishments (e.g. children's artwork - unique birthday easel painting experience) are displayed in various areas of the program space. LCCDC curriculum includes a combination of learning strategies incorporating Creative Curriculum and teacher-inspired ideas (e.g. Zones of Regulation, Child Reading Retention Opportunities). There's always opportunities for letter awareness, phonics, and sounds in the curriculum! The program maintains a low staff to child ratio to allow for increased small group work and individualized learning opportunities. Curriculum also incorporates off-site field trip experiences (e.g. neighborhood walks with some local truck honking, Wickiup Hill, local pet store), on-site events (e.g. guest speakers, Pinwheels, bird feeders), themed days, STEM (e.g. science experiments, sensory opportunities) and parent/teacher conferences. Communication between children and staff is done verbally, with picture cues, and through sign language.

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. LCCDC has policies and procedures in place for hand washing, cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting. Staff were able to verbalize and engage in these processes. Cleaning checklists and daily sanitation reminders were observed to be posted in various areas of the center.

On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were nurturing and attentive to the children's needs. Areas of study throughout the classrooms included dinosaurs, outer space and community helpers. Children had access to an array of materials (e.g. books, imaginative play options, building materials, sensory, painting items, purposeful artwork supplies, balls, romper stompers) that encouraged innovation and playful learning. Activities observed were many (e.g. group discussions, book reading, center play experiences, indoor large gross motor). Evidence of many recent project was seen (e.g. 3D art)! Staff provided a companionable presence allowing children to have many choices in their play experiences. Routine transitions (e.g. encouragement of social graces, clean up activities) worked smoothly into the program's welcoming and cooperative play environment. Staff were overheard providing children with many words of encouragement, providing positive redirection when needed, and engaging children in much meaningful discussion. 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.