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

Name of Center: KidZone Christian Daycare Center & Preschool **Enrollment:** 85 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 17660

Street: 1111 5th Ave N **City:** Fort Dodge Iowa **Zip** 50501 **County:** Webster

Mailing Address: 1111 5th Ave N, Fort Dodge, IA, 50501

Director's Name: Bernadette Ricke **Phone Number:** 515-955-3618

On-Site Supervisor(s): Jessica Fiebig **E-Mail:** kidzone@firstpresfd.org

Date(s) of Visit: 06-10-2025

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

Date Inspected: 06-14-2024

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 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	12	7	36	50	105
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: Raymond Salsbury **Date:** 06-11-2025

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

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

An unannounced annual visit was made to the KidZone Christian Daycare center on 06-10-25 where I met with center director Bernadette Ricke, and assistant director, Jessica Fiebig. Bernadette is well qualified for the position having been with the center since 2012 and taking over the director position in June 2021. Bernadette has also completed on-going professional development in early childhood care and education, and a member of IAEYC. This program is located in the First Presbyterian church in Fort Dodge and while having a very close working relationship with the church is overseen by a separate board of directors. The program makes use of several rooms and the kitchen facilities of the building. The center provides daycare and preschool services to infants through school age children. There are approximately 85 children enrolled in the program served by 19 staff. All areas of the program subject to licensing standards were reviewed during this visit.

The overall layout and design of the building and programming of the center remains the same as in the prior visits. Classrooms are determined by age groups with the infants being separated into two rooms with one for children under 12 months of age and the other for children 12-24 months of age. The younger infant room does have a sleeping area where cribs are located separated from the programming area buy a wall and gated archway. Due to the barrier to line of sight created by the wall staff do need to be in the area with the cribs when children are sleeping. The school age children are located in a large meeting hall which has direct exits to the outside which were observed to be clear of obstruction and opened easily and freely. A smaller room off that space is also used for programming but is too small to accommodate the full daily attendance and is used more for storage of materials and limited small group activities. Each room was observed to be clean with no concerns noted due to maintenance. Each room has access to bathroom facilities directly from the classrooms with the exception of the 4 year old room which uses the restrooms of the connected school age programming space. Each room has additional sinks in the classrooms to facilitate hand washing again with the exception of the 4 year old classroom. Each room has windows along the exterior walls that provide natural light, a view of the outdoors, and ventilation. Each room is divided into activity centers through the placement of furniture and play structures which were arranged so as not to create any blind areas in any of the rooms. The toys and materials present were in good repair and appropriate to the ages of the children present however some classroom had toys that were marked as having been produced as promotional items for food vendors. "Happy Meal" toys are prohibited and need to be removed from all classrooms. A copy of the daily schedule and planned curriculum was posted in each classroom. During the summer the school age children also have a general focus on off-site activities.

Good interactions were observed with the staff in each classroom being actively engaged with the children attending to specific care needs such as diapering and meal service, as well as playing with the children and presenting the planned curriculum. The strong focus on interaction with the children also paired with the center approach to using positive behavioral supports to reduce the occurence of negative behaviors by directing the children to appropriate play activities. Other techniques that were used were reminders of expected behavior, recognition of positive behavior, reward charts, and simple redirection. The result was that there were no observed behavioral issues in any of the classrooms. All teachers used positive tones and word choices when speaking to the children. Ratio was maintained in each classroom as required by age.

Good health and safety practices were observed during the visit. I was not able to observe a diaper change but the teachers in the infant rooms have been with the center for a number of years and have been observed to follow required procedures in the past. The center does use toddler "potty seats" which were observed to have been emptied and cleaned. Good hand washing practices were observed with all age groups with the children and staff washing their hands as required and needed, and doing so in an effective manner. Good cleaning practices were observed with staff waiting for children to be out of the immediate area when using cleaning products. Chemical cleaners, purses, diaper bags, and other materials that could be a safety risk for children were kept in storage where they were not readily accessible. Over the counter medications were labeled with the names of the individual to whom it belongs. First aid kits were present and taken as a whole contained materials necessary to address most common first aid needs. Cots with slip covers are used for napping children. Good sleep practices were observed during the time of the visit including following safe sleep requirements for infants under 1 year of age though there was one crib with a fitted sheet that was too large and needed to be replaced. It is noted that crib was not in use on the day of the visit.

The playground has a commercial grade climbing structure which was installed in 2023 and was observed to be in good repair. A unitary foam fall surfacing covers the entire playground area. The playground is fully enclosed by a combination of tall fence panels, and chain link fencing. Awning structures are used for shade. In addition to the formal playground space the center had also created a water play area on another side of the building near the preschool classroom. The water play does not have any pools or other containers that would hold standing water. A temporary fence of steel fence posts and construction tape. While this is sufficient to define the space it would not prevent children from leaving the area and staff will need to ensure that they are positioned between the area and the street, and provide attentive supervision.

The program makes use of the church kitchen which was observed to be clean. A menu was posted which identified a good variety of nutritious food options. Good food handling practices were observed during the visit with staff washing their hands before handling or serving food items, and some also making use of food service gloves. When portioning meals it was noted that serving spoons were provided to each classroom. While not required it is recommended to make use of measured scoops which can help to ensure each child is provided with a full serving. The meal served included a spiced chicken with rice, peaches, corn, and milk. Staff in the infant rooms did cut all food items into bite size pieces, but other classrooms did not. As an example in the 2 year old room the staff did not cut the peach slices and one child was observed to put a full slice in their mouth and then had difficulty chewing. Having cut the slices in half would have made it easier for the child to eat, and reduced the risk of potentially choking. Good food storage practices were observed with dry pantry items properly stored in air tight sealable food grade containers after the original packaging seal had been broken, and refrigerated items covered and dated as to when they were placed in storage. Meals are served in the classrooms and while the teachers were not eating with the children they did provide supervision at the tables.

In reviewing administrative records all required notices were present and posted in an area readily accessible to parents and visitors. Diapering, hand washing, evacuation, and all other notices were present by all changing stations, sinks used for hand washing, and exits as required. A random selection of both staff and child files were selected for review and compared to the self-audits completed by the center which were found to be accurate. Based on the files reviewed and the self-audits the children's files were generally found to be in full compliance with 13 needing a renewed physical all of which had just expired within the past month or which were due to expire in the current month. All reviewed staff files contained all required documentation. All inspection logs and certificates were available and current with the exception of Playground inspections, and Jessica did acknowledge that while fire and tornado drills had been conducted they had not been documented as required. The center had completed Radon testing but some rooms had borderline levels and it was reported that they would re-test the rooms with a more accurate long term testing option.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

Bernadette identified that the center has been very stable with staffing over the past year which has allowed staff to become familiar with the programming and attend training. This stability was reflected in the strong interactions and program implementation that was observed throughout the center during the visit.

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

109.10(15)b: Emergency instructions, phone numbers, and diagrams for fire, tornado, and flood shall be visibly posted and documented at least once a month for fire and tornado. Records shall be maintained for current and previous year.
-- Documentation of drill practice not maintained as required.

109.11(3)d: Record of monthly inspections of outdoor recreation area and equipment shall be kept.
-- Documentation of inspections was not maintained as required.

109.12(4): Sufficient toilet articles are provided for handwashing.Sufficient and safe indoor play equipment, materials, and

furniture that conforms with CPSC or ASTM.Play equipment, materials, and furniture meet the developmental, activity, and special needs of the children.Room's arrangement does not obstruct the direct observation of children.Individual covered mats, beds, or cots, and appropriate bedding is provided for all children who nap.Procedures are developed and implemented to maintain equipment and materials in a sanitary manner.Sufficient spacing is maintained between equipment to reduce transmission of disease and allow ease of movement by children and staff to respond to activities and care needs.Sanitary procedures are followed for use and storage of personal hygiene articles.
-- Toys and items manufactured as promotional items for food vendors are prohibited and need to be removed from all classrooms.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

A full license will remain in effect 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.