Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Apple Kids

Provider No.: 19261

Address: 600 10th AVE, Marion, IA, 52302

County: Linn

Director's Name: Sara Jones-Thomas

On-Site Supervisor: Jason Snitko

Phone Number: 3193733808

E-Mail: applekidsmarionsite@gmail.com

HHS Visit Date: 09/02/2026

Licensing Period: 10/01/2025 to 10/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 09/13/2024

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

- [ ] PTO
- [X] Licensing Visit
- [ ] Drop In
- [ ] Administrative Change

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

- [ ] Accrediation

Program Duration:

- [X] Year-Round
- [ ] School Year
- [ ] Summer Only

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HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday	6:30 AM to 5:30 PM		
Tuesday	6:30 AM to 5:30 PM		
Wednesday	6:30 AM to 5:30 PM		
Thursday	6:30 AM to 5:30 PM		
Friday	6:30 AM to 5:30 PM		
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

- [X] Infant(0-<24 Months)
- [X] Toddler
- [X] PreSchool
- [X] School Age
- [X] All Ages

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	40	43	51	89	223
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

Apple Kids has been providing childcare throughout the community since 1995. Apple Kids currently operates the following two childcare sites throughout the community: Apple Kids and Apple Kids - Cedar Rapids. Specifically, Apple Kids has been in operation since 2009. The program operates year-round, M-F 6:30am-5:30pm and serves infant through school-age. Total enrolled and attending children were reported to be 175 on 9/2/2026.

Multi-site owner is Kendran Sizemore. Ms. Sizemore started as the Director of Apple Kids in 2001 and then became owner in 2009. Ms. Sizemore has a degree in child and family services, has experience working with children and participates in professional development. Director Sara Jones-Thomas has been the director of Apple Kids since April 2021. Ms. Jones-Thomas has a BA degree in health and sports studies, has instructor certification in CPR and First-Aid, has experience working with children, and participates in professional development. Jason Snitko has been an on-site supervisor of Apple Kids since April 2018. Mr. Snitko has a BA in marketing and a teaching credential. Mr. Snitko has experience working with children and participates in professional development.

On 9/2/2026, program space was observed. Primary programming occurs in age defined classrooms. There are restrooms and handwashing sinks to accommodate capacity. The program has access to outdoor play areas. There is an on-site kitchen in which foods are stored and prepared. Areas of study during the month of the license visit included apples, healthy me, manners and emotions, and the 5 senses. Evidence of previous days' work was displayed throughout the program space and included milestone crafts and letter "A" creations. On 9/2/2026, activities observed included infant cares, center play experiences and indoor large gross motor play. Curriculum allowed for a variety of play experiences that piqued child interest as well as encouraged social emotional growth, innovation and child choice. During the monitoring visit, routine transitions including clean-up procedures and restroom/drink breaks were observed to go smoothly. On 9/2/2026, staff were

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observed to be in ratio and actively engaged with the children providing encouragement and positive redirection when needed. Children appeared comfortable with staff and to be enjoying the day.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

The mission of Apple Kids is "...to provide a safe, nurturing, and fun environment for children ages six weeks to 10 years. Our focus is to provide an encouraging educational experience, promoting social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. Committed to the families we serve, our goal is to give parents complete peace of mind, while being seen as an excellent example of what a quality childcare center should be..."

Apple Kids has the following website for families and persons in the community to learn more about their childcare programs: www.applekidsmarion.com.

Multi-site owner Ms. Sizemore is a seasoned local entrepreneur invested in the community. As of 9/2/2026, the management team of Apple Kids (e.g. Ms. Sizemore, Ms. Jones-Thomas, Mr. Snitko) continues to have noteworthy systems of organization in place to help ensure administrative items are completed as required and maintained in a confidential manner. The management team is knowledgeable of licensing guidelines as well as their own program's policies and procedures. Ms. Jones-Thomas acknowledged continuing to have a core, seasoned team of employees who genuinely enjoy working with children. Upon entering the facility on 9/2/2026, licensing observed a "Meet the Teacher" display. Apple Kids continues to collaborate with their second location to share materials, curriculum, joys, challenges, ideas/planning, and floating staff when needed. Ms. Jones-Thomas reported continuing to receive much positive feedback from families, having consistent full enrollment with a wait list, and receiving many family referrals.

On 9/2/2026, Apple Kids was again found to be maintaining required postings, maintaining a family-staff program information area, utilizing technological communication resources, and offering family programming activities. Curriculum continues to include a combination of learning strategies incorporating a play-based approach, teacher inspired ideas, phonics work, math concepts, small and large gross motor, imaginative play experiences, and crafts. Curriculum also incorporates off-site field trip experiences, on-site guest speaker events, themed days, holiday/seasonal parties, parent/teacher conferences, and occasional parent night out events. Ms. Jones-Thomas discussed how their 2026 summer camp had the highest attendance ever!

As of 9/2/2026, Apple Kids continues to have and update as needed policies and procedures that include those for safety, daily child contact, hand washing, diapering, cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting. On the day of this monitoring visit, staff and management were able to verbalize how they help ensure the children's space is sanitary and hazard free each day by following their current policies and procedures as well as maintaining checklists for cleaning and maintenance. On 9/2/2026, management and staff discussed how they have continued support from the owner Ms. Sizemore, an Apple Kids building maintenance person, their attending families, CCR&R and the CCNC as to daily conditions and repairs. Since the last review, updates to the outdoor play area occurred. The program obtained a new outdoor shed, a new building dehumidifier system, conducted basement waterproofing with mold and air testing, and updated areas of paint.

Apple Kids licensed childcare programs have emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. These programs have successfully navigated through flooding events (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, air quality alerts (2023, 2025, 2026), technology outages (7/19/24 global technology outage, 10/10/2025 AWS outage, 10/29/2025 Microsoft outage) and 2026 nationwide cyclosporiasis outbreak.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

None noted.

4. Any corrective action plans, provisional license, and safety plans-steps to get into compliance

Not applicable.

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

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Flooring is showing ware particularly noted in the indoor large gross motor room.

Increase areas of shade on the outdoor play spaces.

Increase kitchen storage.

To help with sanitation, please install a 3-compartment sink in the kitchen and infant room.

The 2yo room diapering station is showing ware and in need of replacement. Please continue to note all diapering surfaces shall be non-porous to ensure proper cleaning and disinfecting between each diaper change. Wood surface and soft pads are porous and not sanitary for diapering.

The infant room secondary exit has an uneven path of egress. Consider solutions to improve infant evacuation route.

If possible, please install a hand-washing sink in the 3yo and 4yo rooms.

To help with the items noted in this report, please connect with CCR&R and apply for the "Growing Iowa" fund (https://www.iowaccrr.org/child-care-providers/iowa-child-care-funding-opportunities/) which has been designed to help support regulatory compliance and quality.

Targeted Assessment: Behavior Management
Licensing discussed with management oversight of behavior management related to helping childcare staff: 1) understand expectations, 2) manage frustrations, and 3) monitor performance. Management discussed how they are present in the center talking with staff, step into rooms with elevated noise level, encourage staff to come to management with child behavior concerns, ensure staff have breaks, schedule extra staff whenever possible, establish child specific behavior plans when needed, complete written incident reports, send children and/or staff home when needed, and exercise their required polices for enrollment and disenrollment of children as needed. Licensing and management also talked about resources available through the CCR&R behavioral specialist position and our CCNC as well as the local Tanager Place Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) program.

The program's license remains in full status. Thank you for the visit.

Date: 10/02/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons

Non-compliance with any of the mandated regulatory requirements listed above may lead to the cancellation or revocation of your Child Care License. Please take steps necessary to completely address each of the violations noted above.

Child Care Resource and Referral is an excellent resource for providers to access training options and support in your area. You can reach Child Care Resource and Referral at **https://iowaccrr.org**.