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, Jamee Wiebold; Shayla Slager; Stephanie Candler; Vania Kniffen **E-Mail:** growingpatch2017@gmail.com

Date(s) of Visit: 06-12-2025

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

LICENSING VISITS

New Application **Re-Application** X **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: 03-18-2025

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:** 07-18-2025

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

Not applicable.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

Growing Patch (GP) operates multiple locations in the community. Specifically, this license is for Growing Patch Summer Camp (GPSC) located inside Center Point-Urbana Intermediate School which is part of the Center Point-Urbana (CPU) 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. During 2025, GPSC operates 6/2/2025-8/15/2025. 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 supervisors (OSS) have experience working with children and continue to pursue professional goals including annual child development training.

On 6/12/2025, program space was observed.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

GP programs offer a variety of early learning programming and childcare to help meet the needs of children and families in the community. Their programs are located in predominantly rural areas and accept a variety of funding sources. In March 2025, GP celebrated their 8th year of business. GPSC commenced operations on 5/31/2022 and is currently celebrating their 4th year of business. Congratulations!

GP sponsors social media pages for those in the community to learn more about their programs.

The mission of GP programs 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."

GP participates in quality initiatives including QRS and CACFP. GP has historically been recognized for their support of CPU high school students.

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 GP programs have remained primarily consistent. GP programs have noteworthy systems of organization in place to help ensure administrative items are completed and maintained as required. In turn, GP programs run smoothly. The management team is also knowledgeable of licensing guidelines as well as their own program's policies and procedures.

Since the last monitoring visit, GP has retained many seasoned staff throughout all their programs. OSS Shayla Slager is celebrating her 4th year at GPSC having been at this location since it opened! Several staff have or are working towards

degrees in early childhood. GP programs continue to support onboarding of new employees within the first 90 days which includes the required trainings as well as training in curriculum, PBIS and CACFP. Documentation reviewed indicates staff professional growth continues to exceed licensing requirements. Ms. Liedtke talked about how she continues to invest in her employees by encouraging professional goals including participation in TEACH/Wage$, offering flexible scheduling whenever possible, offering competitive wages/benefits, incorporating a training-based pay scale, acknowledging staff successes, and having teacher work/professional development days built into the year.

GP programs 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, air quality alerts (2023, 2025) and 7/19/24 global technology outage.

Specifically, GPSC has a collaborative partnership with the CPU Community 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. GPSC has access to the school kitchen to prepare, store and serve foods. There is an AED on-site. GP programs continue to partner with the CPU school district for swimming lessons and summer school activities as needed. Management and staff continue to talk favorably about the program's relationship with the school describing it as "excellent".

GPSC's primary space is located inside the school cafeteria and school gymnasium. GPSC also has access to the outdoor play areas. Since the last review, the program obtained wheeled carts for easier access to water and sunscreen throughout the day. 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. Frost Park, splash pads, Collins Theater, bowling, local baseball game, 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.

GP programs continue efforts at optimal communication between the program/staff and families. There are organized parent-staff/program information centers, places to display children's accomplishments (including artwork) for families to enjoy, regular program newsletters, technological communication resources, and family programming activities including fundraising events.

GP programs collaborate well with community partners including Child Care Resource and Referral, local AEA, local school district, local businesses, city recreational department, and health professionals. Ms. Liedtke discussed continuing to apply for community and state grants.

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. Recent areas of study include "Escape Room" and "H2Oasis" incorporating cleverly planned water events including beach ball-pool noodle baseball and water balloon hot potato as well as many "mysterious" games and puzzles. Activities observed included after lunch quiet activities. Routine transitions (e.g. restroom and drink breaks) worked smoothly into the daily programming. Staff provided a companionable presence and were overheard providing children words of encouragement, utilizing positive redirection when needed and encouraging the use of social graces. 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:

Continue to collaborate with the school district regarding maintenance of the outdoor playground (e.g. adequate cushion surface depth, chipping/rusting equipment, power washing of outdoor equipment). If any area of the outdoor playground becomes unsatisfactory, the childcare shall refrain from accessing those areas until remedies are made.

The program's license remains in full force. 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.