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

Name of Center: UNI Child Development Center **Enrollment:** 61 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 22665

Street: 1901 Campus ST **City:** Cedar Falls Iowa **Zip** 50613 **County:** Black Hawk

Mailing Address: 1901 Campus ST, Cedar Falls, IA, 50613

Director's Name: Maria Ackerson **Phone Number:** 319-273-3946

On-Site Supervisor(s): Aimee Klostermann **E-Mail:** maria.ackerson@uni.edu

Date(s) of Visit: 03-21-2024

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

Date Inspected: 03-21-2024

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 X NAEYC NSACA Other NA

Program Serves: X 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*	*Summary Only*

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General	16	16	60	0	92
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 04-01-2023 to 04-01-2025
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Becky Frost **Date:** 03-26-2024

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

N/A

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

On 03/21/24 I made an unannounced off year licensing visit to UNI Child Development Center in Cedar Falls. I was accompanied by Rachel Salsbury, a child care consultant with DHHS. I met with Maria Ackerson, the director. She became director on 09/26/22. Ms. Ackerson has a BA in social work. She was previously a director of a childcare center for five years and five additional years as an employee in a childcare center. Aimee Klostermann is the on-site supervisor and she is in charge when Ms. Ackerson is away from the center. Ms. Klostermann has an MA in early childhood and a BA in early childhood education. The center employs ten lead teachers and 50 student staff members. Field experience students also work in the classrooms. Primary teachers have their BA or master's degrees. Staff members are University of Northern Iowa employees.

The program operates out of a building on the University of Northern Iowa campus. The center opened in its current location on 01/14/13. The program operates Monday through Friday from 7:30 am until 5:30 pm during the school year and 7:30 am until 5:00 pm during the summer months. It serves infants through preschool-aged children. There are currently 61 children enrolled. The parents must have a UNI connection (faculty or student) for the children to attend the program. The program partners with Head Start to provide care to eligible children through an Early Access grant. Head Start provides a family worker and a program manager. Grace Parsley is the family worker.

The center is NAEYC accredited, and it expires on 01/01/29.

The center operates out of the following classrooms, Kittens (infants, birth until approximately 12-14 months), Cubs (12-14 months until two-years-old), Cats (18 months until two and one-half-year-olds), Pumas (two and one-half through three-year-old's), and Panthers (three and one-half through five-year-old's). An inspection of each room was completed. Children typically stay in the room until the completion of the semester or school year and then transition to the new room in the fall unless children must move up for numbers.

Windows provide natural lighting. The rooms are decorated with pictures of the children and their families, the children's art projects, and posters to assist the children with the learning process, such as the alphabet, shapes, colors and numbers. There is an area for circle time. The hallways are decorated with multiple pictures of the children and their artwork. The entrance is also decorated with artwork. There are pictures of the lead staff members near the office and outside of each room.

The centers observed on the day of the licensing visit include library, Lego/blocks, table toys, games, puzzles, Ipads, transportation, play dough, puppets, art, dramatic play, listening, writing, math, science/discovery, woodworking, sensory table and music. Centers were arranged in a manner that allowed easy movement between activities, but it also allowed for clear supervision by staff members. Materials were in good condition. The materials are located at child level, so they were easily accessible to the children. In the Puma room there is an electrical cord for a small lamp that the child could have access to. Secure this cord so children do not have access to it. In the Puma room you must move the shelf that is in front of the door that connects the room to the Panther room. This is a potential fire exit and must be unobstructed. This will not be cited because the door was not completely obstructed and the teacher agreed to move it.

In the hallway outside the rooms there are large dry erase boards for the children to draw on. This is also where the children's lockers are located. Each locker has a picture of the child with his or her family.

The center uses Iowa Early Learning Standards to create lesson plans. The curriculum is based on accepted theories of child development such as Piaget, Vygotsky, Adler and Erickson. It is individualized to meet the needs of every child. Activities are developed around studies/themes. The length of the study depends on the subject and the children's interest level. The lead teachers in each room work together to develop their own lesson plans. The center has a website and the teachers each have their own blog where they keep parents informed of themes and activities. The program completes GOLD assessments in the fall, winter and spring. They complete a DECA assessment after four weeks of observation and ASQ assessments on all children under the age of four within 45 days. The Brigance Screening tool is used on four and five-year-old children.

The center uses the Brightwheel application for daily sheets. This app provides the parents direct access to the information. The Brightwheel is also used to communicate with the parents from all classrooms.

Each room has access to cell phones. Emergency numbers with the center's address and phone number were posted in each room. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and evacuation diagrams were posted by all the main program doors and outdoor exits in the classrooms. The evacuation diagrams must also be posted near all three exits out of the gym. This was cited in last year's report also. A daily schedule was posted in each room. A lesson plan was available for review in each room.

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. Each room keeps documentation of drills in their room. I reviewed documentation of monthly playground inspections. A radon test was completed in February 2023 and is good for two years. Results were within EPA guidelines. The fuel burning inspection was completed and no concerns were noted. A carbon monoxide detector is in the hallway on top of the lockers. Outlets were protected. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 03/21/24.

The program participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The center provides the children with breakfast, lunch and a morning and afternoon snack. The center has a contract with the University of Northern Iowa dining center in the towers for lunch and the center prepares breakfast and snacks. They use a four-week rotation of menus. The program does not claim CACFP funds for the morning snack and serve non-creditable snacks on occasion. The center must always follow CACFP guidelines for all food served at the center whether you receive reimbursement or not.

Lunch dishes are placed through an industrial dishwasher in the on-site kitchen and dishes for breakfast and snacks are washed in the classrooms using the three-step method. There are three sinks in each room specifically for the purpose of washing dishes. There is a refrigerator in each of the rooms and thermometers were present. The temperature for the refrigerator in the Puma room was 45 degrees and should be 40 degrees or lower. Keep an eye on this to make sure it is maintaining a proper temperature. There is a refrigerator in the kitchen and thermometers were present.

Menus were posted in each of the rooms and the infant's feeding schedules were posted in the infant room. The center provides formula, baby food and cereal. Parents can provide their own if they prefer a different brand. The center will provide a different brand if there is a note from a doctor. There is a dishwasher in the infant room for dishes. They wash bottles using the three-step method in the room. Allergies and food restrictions are posted in each room.

The center provides diapers and wet wipes to the Head Start children. I observed diaper changes in multiple rooms and procedures are followed. A parent provided powder for use on an infant. Powder is not allowed in childcare because it can be an asthmatic trigger for children. The staff member did not use the powder once she was informed of this.

There is a diaper changing table in the bathroom shared by the Cats and Cubs that has a built in mat on it. The mat has some pin sized holes in it and it is starting to ripple. It should be replaced or you could place a new mat on top of it.

The center is using Tesano Oxygenated Water SAO (Stabilized Aqueous Ozone) 24 to sanitize the food tables and disinfect the changing tables. I am in contact with the child care nurse consultant to get more information on this product.

Cribs are used to nap in the infant room and they move over to cots when they turn one-year-old. The other rooms use cots to nap.

The parent information is located on a bulletin board inside each classroom. The mandatory reporter, childcare consultant and the handbook availability were posted. The license was conspicuously hung. A no-smoking sign was posted at the entrance. If there is a communicable disease it is posted outside the door to enter the center so that all parents have access to the information.

The children have use of the gym for gross motor activities. The gym has turf, but it is unknown if the turf used meets the

requirements for fall surfacing. There is a piece of climbing equipment that has a fall height greater than 18 inches. Please find out if the turf used meets the fall surfacing requirements. If it does not, you should remove the piece of equipment or add an approved piece of fall surfacing.

The program has a large fenced in playground area for the children. They do not have any climbing equipment. They have rubber tiles in an area where a ramp was once located. The rubber tiles are in poor condition. Some are loose, curling, they provide an uneven walking surface, and there are large gaps between many of them causing a tripping hazard. There is also an uneven grade between the sidewalk and grass as you walk out to the playground and an uneven grade from the grass to the rubber tiles. This is considered a tripping hazard. You could diminish this by possibly painting the area to make the unlevel area more noticeable. There is a sandbox. The sandbox has a cover, but it was coming off in a corner. Having a secure cover will prevent animals getting in the sandbox and defecating. There is a nice bike path through the area. There is a woodworking center, playhouses, a tunnel and stumps for the children to walk on. There are bird feeders for the children to enjoy the birds and benches for the children to rest. There is a stage area and a large sensory area with several activities.

Staff members were amazing. Staff members are experienced and have worked together as a team for a long time. They have fun and creative activities for the children to help them learn. Staff members provide clear and easy to understand directions to the children. Staff members are enthusiastic and provide the children with praise. Staff members provided great reminders for the children to cover their coughs and to wash their hands. They had conversations with the children about sharing. Staff members provide the children with choices and were actively engaged in activities with the children. Staff members used play to teach the children about colors and counting. Positive redirection was used when necessary. They were great about stepping in and sitting with children and introducing new activities to diffuse situations. They were expressive while reading to the children to make the story interesting. The children enjoyed their time at the center.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

Ms. Ackerson states she has the highest level of praise for the teachers. They provide high quality childcare and they are hard working. Ms. Ackerson states the staff members are professional and dedicated. They go above and beyond and pour all their energy into the children.

Ms. Ackerson states staff members have a good understanding of child development and knowing what is age appropriate. They are great role models for the student staff members in their classrooms.

Ms. Ackerson states they have a safety committee and an on-site safety officer.

Ms. Ackerson states that staff members continue to get continuing education credits. They have four staff members with master's degrees and two additional staff members just graduated with their master degrees.

Ms. Ackerson states nine of their lead teachers have degrees in education and early childhood education. One lead teacher has a degree in public health. She states this provides a different prospective- and set of eyes for the program.

Ms. Ackerson states they have spent the last year cultivating family engagement within the program. They had a night where families from different cultures brough foods representing where they are from. They have open gym nights, family picnics and they were in the Homecoming parade to name a few activities. She states this has allowed families to get to know one another and make friends with one another.

Ms. Ackerson states they completed their NAEYC accreditation, which will expire on 01/01/29. Staff members worked very hard all spring and summer to prepare for the visit, They scored a 96% overall and three classrooms scored 100%.

The program received money through the DHHS grant.

The center has a lactation room for nursing mothers.

Aimee Klostermann has been a long-term, consistent and constant leader and teacher for the program and is leaving at the end of the school year. I have enjoyed working with her and she will be missed.

Alexis "Lexie" Johansen has also been with the center for many years. She has provided consistency in the preschool classroom and does an amazing job. She is also leaving at the end of the school year and will be missed.

There are posters with multiple visual cues in the classrooms for the children. I observed the staff members use the visual cues and PBIS to positively redirect behaviors.

The Brightwheel app allows staff members to send parents pictures and allows them to communicate with parents daily.

The program is partnering with Head Start to provide care to eligible children through an Early Access grant. Head Start provides a family worker and a program manager.

The program receives a lot of support from UNI.

They place “best practice” in the fore front when teachers make decisions, not always what is easiest.

The center is in a secured location.

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

109.11(3)a: Center shall ensure that: Facility and premises are sanitary, safe, and hazard free. Adequate indoor and outdoor space is provided. The outdoor area shall include safe play equipment and area of shade. Sufficient space provided for dining. Sufficient lighting shall be provided. Sufficient ventilation. Sufficient heating. sufficient cooling. Sufficient bathroom and diapering facilities. Equipment, including kitchen appliances, are maintained so as not to result in burns, shock, or injury to children. Sanitation and safety procedures for the center are developed and implemented to reduce risk or injury or harm to children and reduce transmission of disease.
They have rubber tiles in an area where a ramp was once located. The rubber tiles are in poor condition. Some are loose, curling, they provide an uneven walking surface, and there are large gaps between many of them causing a tripping hazard. There is also an uneven grade between the sidewalk and grass as you walk out to the playground and an uneven grade from the grass to the rubber tiles. This is considered a tripping hazard. You could diminish this by possibly painting the area to make the unlevel area more noticeable.

109.15(2): Center shall follow minimum CACFP menu patterns for meals and snacks.Menus planned one week in advance, made available to parents, and kept on file with substitutions noted.Avoid foods with high incident rate of causing choking. The program does not claim CACFP funds for the morning snack and serve non-creditable snacks on occasion. The center must always follow CACFP guidelines for all food served at the center whether you receive reimbursement or not.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

A full license is issued for the remainder of the licensing period. All DHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period.

*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.