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

Name of Center: St Matthew Preschool **Enrollment:** 100 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 47708

Street: 2244 1st Ave NE **City:** Cedar Rapids Iowa **Zip** 52402 **County:** Linn

Mailing Address: 2244 1st Ave NE, Cedar Rapids, IA, 52402

Director's Name: Tami Kolden **Phone Number:** 319-362-3021

On-Site Supervisor(s): Heather Waddell, Assistant Director **E-Mail:** tami.kolden@crxcs.org
connie.schulte@crxcs.org

Date(s) of Visit: 01-08-2025

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: 04-10-2023

Comments :

LICENSE TYPE: **Child Care** X **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: Infants (0-23 mo.) 2 Years X Preschool-Age School-Age
Get-Well Evening Care Special Needs

SCHEDULE: Year-round X School-Year Summer Only

HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General			100		100
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 02-01-2025 to 02-01-2027
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons **Date:** 03-03-2025

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

Not applicable.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

St. Matthew Preschool is a non-profit program that has been in operation since 1984. St. Matthew Preschool is located inside St. Matthew Catholic Elementary School. St. Matthew Preschool functions under the jurisdiction of the St. Matthew Board of Education which consists of several elected members of the parish and the pastor. This program offers a 3-year-old preschool program and a 4-year-old preschool program. The program operates school-year only Monday through Friday 8:15am to 11:30am. Current enrollment is 100.

Xavier Catholic Schools executive childcare director is Connie Schulte. Ms. Schulte has been in this role since July 2024, has much licensed childcare center director experience and continues to participate in much child development related training. St. Matthew Preschool's director is Tami Kolden. Ms. Kolden has been the director since August 2021. Ms. Kolden has a BA degree in elementary education with early childhood endorsement, over 20 years experience working with children, and continues to participate in much child development related training. Heather Waddell has been an employee of St. Matthew's for several years prior to moving into the on-site supervisor/assistant director position in fall 2019. Ms. Waddell has many years of experience working with children and also continues to participate in much child development related training.

On 1/8/2025, program space was observed.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

St. Matthew Preschool is a well established program offering a variety of early learning preschool opportunities to help meet the needs of children and families in the community. This preschool has been in operation since 1984. In fall 2025, this program will be celebrating their 41st year of preschool. Congratulations!

St. Matthew Preschool has the following website for families and the community to access information about the program: http://www.stmatthewcr.org/preschool/.

St. Matthew's mission is to "...provide a Christian environment in which each child can grow spiritually, emotionally, physically, and intellectually through age-appropriate activities. We are committed, in collaboration with families, to enhance each child's character development and nurture the individual strengths and talents that allow each child to reach their potential..."

St. Matthew Preschool has a history of participation in quality initiatives including a local quality initiative. Possible future goals include IQ4K participation.

Ownership and management of St. Matthew Preschool is consistent and seasoned. The program's management team (e.g. Ms. Schulte, Ms. Kolden, Ms. Waddell) is professional and organized, and in turn, daily operations run smoothly. The management team has noteworthy systems of organization in place to help ensure administrative items are completed as required and maintained in a secure manner. The management team is knowledgeable of licensing guidelines as well as

their own program's policies and procedures.

Since the last review, St. Matthew Preschool has retained seasoned employees as well as hired a few new ones. Several staff have advanced teaching degrees and/or CDAs. Staff reported celebrating 4 years and 1 year with this preschool. Staff appreciation and displays of gratitude continue to be part of the program's success. Ms. Kolden discussed having a really great team of staff.

St. Matthew Preschool is a ministry of St. Matthew Catholic Church. St. Matthew Preschool is located inside a building that also houses the St. Matthew Elementary School and St. Matthew ECC. All programs in the building are part of the Archdiocese of Dubuque. St. Matthew Preschool operates under a school board. Church administration, school administration, St. Matthew ECC, school custodial staff, the board, and school kitchen personnel help ensure the program space is sanitary and hazard free each day. The school kitchen is regularly inspected by the local health department. The space is ADA accessible and an AED machine is on-site. Since the last review, lighting was replaced and restroom flooring was updated.

St. Matthew Preschool has emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. The program has 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, 2023 air quality alerts and 7/19/24 global technology outage.

St. Matthew Preschool 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. The preschool has an active PTO (parent teacher organization). The PTO holds regular meetings, sponsors fundraising events, holds annual back to school events, and sponsors family activities. St. Matthew Preschool offers many social family events throughout the year including an annual Christmas program, Halloween event, fall open house, regular all school/program book fairs, ice cream social, fundraisers, Catholic Schools celebration, and spring graduation ceremony. Curriculum continues to incorporate staff/family conferences, on-site guest speaker events, off-site field trips, letter/number recognition activities, play experiences, literacy activities (reading buddy program), and teacher-inspired ideas.

St. Matthew Preschool's classrooms continue to be arranged in a thoughtful manner with learning at the forefront. Areas to celebrate children and their accomplishments (e.g. artwork; Every Child is An Artist Display room #104) are well established. Staff use a variety of skilled techniques to help children transition throughout the preschool day. The preschool has access to electronic materials to help enhance the curriculum including iPads and SMART boards.

St. Matthew Preschool collaborates well with community agencies, area access services, local health professionals and a variety of local businesses. St. Mathew Preschool has a strong partnership with the Cedar Rapids Community School District to provide a statewide voluntary 4-year-old preschool program.

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. The program has policies and procedures in place for cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing. Cleaning supplies as well as cleaning checklists/reminders were observed on-site.

On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were nurturing and attentive to the children's needs. Staff were observed warmly greeting children and families as they arrived for preschool. Activities observed were many (e.g. center play, book reading, circle discussion, music with movement, indoor large gross motor). Children have access to an array of materials (e.g. books, imaginative play options, building materials, games, puzzles, sensory, crafts) that encouraged innovative play. Staff provided a companionable presence allowing children to have many choices in their play experiences. Routine transitions (e.g. clean up activities, snacks rituals) worked smoothly into the program's welcoming and cooperative play environment. Throughout the classrooms, staff were overheard providing children with meaningful discussion, 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:

Repair the cracked grey heavy plastic climbing wall steps attached to the outdoor climber.

Ensure cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting supplies are inaccessible to children (Travel 4 Room).

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.