Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: St Theresa Early Childhood Learning Center

Provider No.: 25415

Address: 1230 Merle Hay RD, Des Moines, IA, 50311

County: Polk

Director's Name: Jessica Chicoine

On-Site Supervisor: LeAnn Hitchen

Phone Number: 5152773788

E-Mail: GWatznauer@stsdsm.com

HHS Visit Date: 09/23/2026

Licensing Period: 09/01/2025 to 09/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 10/29/2025

Comments: Fire inspections due at least every three years; completed by LT Eric Jacobson Fire Inspector/Investigator; Des Moines Fire Dept

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	7:00 AM to 5:30 PM		
Tuesday	7:00 AM to 5:30 PM		
Wednesday	7:00 AM to 5:30 PM		
Thursday	7:00 AM to 5:30 PM		
Friday	7:00 AM to 5:30 PM		
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	0	21	21	60	102
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

An unannounced licensing visit was conducted 9/23/26. Director Jessica Chicoine was present for this visit.

St. Theresa Childcare is overseen by a Board and operates in conjunction with St. Theresa Church and School and as of 2025, operates within the school building. Families do not have to be Catholic to enroll in this child care program, however, many children who attend this center also attend the school. The child care program has been in existence for over 20 years. The center serves children ages two through school age, and provides year-round programming. There is a before and after school component during the school year and full day programming during the summer for school age children. There is also a wrap around program provided so that children can attend all day during the school year who attend preschool. There are three classrooms in the preschool area. The UPK program moved to the school and is now under the oversight of Department of Education. School-age children use the gym area for program space and can use the parish hall in an emergency or if the gym is in use. Child care is open 7AM to 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday.

Jessica Chicoine became the director in 2025. Jessica has an associate's degree in Early Childhood Education and additional credit hours towards a bachelor's along with several years of child care experience.. She meets the requirements for the position. As of July 2024, LeAnn Hitchen was named an on-site director, having prior child care experience and now working full time for this center.

In August 2025, St Theresa Early Childhood Learning center had a new programming space within the school building. There are two classrooms, each with a capacity of 21 students. The center is using the Frog Street Curriculum. The center

has transitioned to using the Bright Wheel Application to communicate with parents/attendance. Each classroom is nicely organized and offers a variety of age/developmentally appropriate toys and learning centers. The children were content, having just come inside from outdoor playing when this visit occurred.

This program offers morning snack, lunch and afternoon snack. The school cafeteria does prepare and provide the meals per CACFP healthy guidelines for eating. The children have lunch and snack family style in the classrooms.

This center has two areas of play structures, separated for ages. The playground area for younger children is enclosed by chain link fencing and pour and play safety surfacing.

Transportation: some transportation is available through the school/school bus drivers.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

There is a secure entrance into the center with video monitoring in hallways and some exterior.

There is a child care advisory committee in place.

The director meets with other directors of centers within the Diocese several times a year for meetings.

The staff have strong relationships and good communication with families.

The center focuses on safety, well-being and quality of care.

There is a family atmosphere to the program and families feel as the center is a part of their family.

The program has great support from the church and the school.

The program does not have to advertise, word of mouth is strong for this program.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

109.10(13)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.

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

109.10(13)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.
-When reviewing documentation of fire/tornado drills, some months had been omitted.
-The director will ensure monthly emergency drills are completed and documented

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

A full license is recommended.

The school and pre-school programming area has new HVAC as of 2026.

This program operates in within the St Theresa Catholic School; and is exempt from child care licensing radon testing regulations; however radon testing was completed, that revealed levels over 4.0 (which is the safety level) and it is highly recommended that retesting to confirm radon levels is completed and then mitigated if needed.

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Date: 10/20/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Maggie Gibson, SWIV

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**.