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

Name of Center: College Community ECC-Prairie Heights **Enrollment:** 44 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 25035

Street: 190 76th AVE SW **City:** Cedar Rapids Iowa **Zip** 52404 **County:** Linn

Mailing Address: 401 76th AVE SW, Cedar Rapids, IA, 52404

Director's Name: Kathleen "Kathy" Schulte **Phone Number:** 319-848-5296

On-Site Supervisor(s): Allisha Miller **E-Mail:** kschulte@crprairie.org

Date(s) of Visit: 03-19-2024

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

Date Inspected: 04-18-2022

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: Infants (0-23 mo.) 2 Years X Preschool-Age X School-Age

Get-Well Evening Care Special Needs

SCHEDULE: X Year-round School-Year Summer Only

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General			24	186	210
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 04-01-2024 to 04-01-2026
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons **Date:** 04-15-2024

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

Not applicable.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

College Community Early Childhood Center (CCECC) has been in operation for many years and operates several program throughout the College Community School District. Specifically, CCECC - Prairie Heights is located inside Prairie Heights Elementary School. The CCECC - Prairie Heights license includes childcare for school-age children (primarily located in the school cafeteria) outside of school hours and childcare for preschool-age children (primarily located in classroom #210, full days Monday and T-F afternoon) outside of the statewide voluntary 4-year-old preschool hours. During the summer, some full days of emergency closing (e.g. snow day), and some breaks (e.g. holiday, spring), this program has the ability to combine with other CCECC sites to provide full day child care. Current enrollment is 35.

Multi-site director Kathleen "Kathy" Schulte has a MA degree in early childhood elementary education. Ms Schulte has over 25 years of experience working with children including during her work as a school principal and early childhood teacher. Multi-site school-age coordinator is Whitney Hinrichs. Ms. Hinrichs has several years experience working with children and continues to participate in much child development related training. Specific site supervisor is Allisha Miller. Ms. Miller has an AA degree in early childhood, over 3 years of experience in childcare and continues to participate in much child development related training.

On 3/19/2024, program space was observed.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

CCECC operates multiple sites throughout the community that offer a variety of childcare and early learning programming opportunities to help meet the needs of children and families. CCECC is well-established and accepts a variety of funding sources.

CCECC has a history of participation in quality initiatives. Several CCECC sites have achieved and maintain NAEYC accreditation. The College Community School District is one of only eight school districts across the country recognized as a 2022 Fall “Lighthouse System” by AASA, The School Superintendents Association. College Community was recognized in the area of: Redesign for Early Learning. College Community Schools received special recognition for Strength in Early Learning Partnerships in Service for Highly Diverse Community.

CCECC has the following website for families and the community to access information about their programs: https://www.crprairie.org/.

According to the family handbook the mission of CCECC is "...Guided by high expectations, partnerships with our schools and families, and extensive knowledge of child development, Early Learning Staff provide a broad range of educational opportunities that enable students to enter Elementary School with the skills necessary to ensure quality learning today for tomorrow."

CCECC is non-profit and operates under a Board of Directors. Ownership and management of the program has remained

consistent. The management team includes multi-site early childhood principal-director Ms. Schulte, assistant director Erin Hill, administrative assistant Jenna Langhurst, early childhood instructional coach Sara Kayser, multi-site school-age coordinator Whitney Hinrichs, and site specific supervisor. Ms. Schulte and the entire CCECC management team are organized, and in turn, CCECC programs operate smoothly. Ms. Schulte and the seasoned CCECC management team have noteworthy systems of organization in place to help ensure administrative items are complete as required and maintained in a secure manner. There is a collaboration among all CCECC sites to share materials, curriculum, joys, challenges, and ideas/planning.

Since the last monitoring visit, CCECC has retained as well as hired some new staff. Specifically, staff at this location reported celebrating 2 years and over 3 months employment with CCECC. Many CCECC staff have advanced degrees in education and early childhood development. Since 2009, CCECC has had an immense number of staff participate in the TEACH program. CCECC currently has 11 staff participating in the TEACH program. This is quite impressive! Each new staff is encouraged and given the opportunity to pursue a CDA at no training cost. Documentation indicates that CCECC employees often complete annual professional growth training that exceeds Iowa Code requirements (most recently all staff completing updated PBIS training). Management discussed how one CCECC was selected to be a PBIS demonstration site. Management talked about how CCECC values education and understands the link between education and quality programming. The program has a regularly updated professional orientation system for onboarding new staff and for continuous transfer of knowledge to seasoned staff. Since the last review, orientation has been updated to include more face-to-name training within the first 90 days of employment. The program utilizes the Iowa Wages Program. Management acknowledged the hard work their highly qualified team of staff do each day and who continue to show their commitment to the children and families they serve. Management discussed recent changes in staff compensation including vacation buy-back, increased wages and bonuses. Management continues to display their appreciation through staff shout-outs, special food days (e.g. soup day, sub lunches, baked potato bar, morning donuts, chocolate, fully stocked ice cream), and classroom door decorating contests. Management described their staff as "...an extension of a family..."

CCECC sites have emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. CCECC sites have successfully navigated through the 2008 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 and 2023 air quality alerts.

CCECC sites continue 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 (e.g. use of App), and supports family programming activities (e.g. ReadyRosie). Inclusive registration events are held (e.g. recent meet and greet preschool families, parent-program conferences). Parents are invited to be part of the PBIS leadership team. CCECC regularly conducts a family survey and continues to note much program satisfaction with positive family feedback.

CCECC - Prairie Heights has a collaborative partnership with the school district. The school building and grounds are maintained. 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. Since the last review, custodial checklists were established to note cleaning efforts. The school kitchen is inspected at least annually by the health department. There is an AED on-site. The program has regular access to additional areas within the school including the school gymnasium for large gross motor activities. CCECC management presents an annual report to the school board noting accomplishments.

Child areas continue to be arranged in a thoughtful manner keeping learning at the forefront. CCECC curriculum is designed to help children become lifelong learners. Curriculum is a combination of developmentally appropriate learning strategies including Iowa Early Learning Standards, Creative Curriculum (e.g. gold, cloud), Everyday Math Enrichment, Second Step, Jolly Phonics, Heggerty Phonics Awareness, Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports, SPARK after-school, Mind Works and homework assistance. Curriculum also incorporates off-site field trip experiences (e.g. Super Skate, bowling, local parks, Bloomsbury Farm, Children's Museum) on-site guest speaker events (e.g. storyteller, library, Kona Ice, Peppy's Ice Cream, Music on the Move), themed days (e.g. water play), optional enrichments experiences (e.g. Daytime Dancers, Little Sports, running club, lending book library, Book Fairs), seasonal parties (e.g. Winterfest) and age defined outdoor play spaces. Communication between children and staff is done verbally, with picture cues, and through sign language. CCECC 2024 summer programming and school-year 2024-2025 enrollment are well underway with established waiting lists. Management discussed several future goals related to curriculum improvements (e.g. physical activity, gardening. whole room of study approach). School-age staff reported being most proud of how organized the child materials are as well as the relationships they've built with the children which has help increase positive behaviors.

CCECC sites collaborate well with many community partners including local businesses, health professionals, early access professionals, TIES, head start (e.g. new head start liaison), other local school districts, various non-profit organizations, ECI, and CCR&R. CCECC applies for and receives grants (e.g. expansion 2022, expansion 2023). Management discussed being proud of their continued expansion efforts to help meet the needs of the community and their waiting lists.

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 hand washing, diapering, cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing. Cleaning checklists and reminders are posted in various areas.

On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were observed to be nurturing and attentive to the children's needs. Staff were observed warmly greeting children and family as they arrived for the day. School-age and preschool-age children have access to an array of materials (e.g. games, books, sensory items, imaginative play options, building materials, crafts) that encouraged innovative play. Activities offered were many (e.g. school-age large gross motor games of Everyone's It Tag, preschool small group phonics work, music with movement). Staff provided a companionable presence allowing children to have many choices in their play experiences. Routine transitions (e.g. cleanup, program/school transition, face-to-name/attendance, lunch rituals) worked smoothly into the program's welcoming and cooperative play environment. Staff were overheard providing children with many words of encouragement, utilizing PBIS teachings and encouraging 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:

During the monitoring visit, the preschool room first-aid kit/bag (which also contained one child's rescue medication) was found to have been left at a different CCECC site over spring break. The first-aid kit/bag was retrieved and returned to CCECC - Prairie Heights prior to the end of the on-site visit. Continue to review policies and procedures with all staff regarding first-aid kit/bag and medication storage.

Ensure each child's personal items are stored separately and off the floor to help prevent the spread of possible illness, insects, etc.

Continue to review food service routines with all staff including hand washing as well as the cleaning and sanitizing of food surfaces.

Evidence of hornet/wasp nest was observed in the awning-shade structure above the outdoor playground sandbox. Remove. Some areas of the outdoor equipment are in need of repair or replacement (e.g. cracks on the orange panel attached to a climber creating pinching hazard, cracks on orange tunnel panel attached to climber creating pinching hazard). 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 areas of the outdoor playground become unsatisfactory, the childcare shall refrain from accessing those areas until remedies are made.

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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.