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: 10/08/2025

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

**Fire Inspection:**

Date Inspected: 04/11/2024

Comments: Fire inspections due at least every three years; completed by FF E Jacobson, 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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**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 full licensing visit was completed 10-8-25. 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.

New for August 2025, St Theresa Early Childhood Learning center has 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 are engaged and teachers are responsive to the children.

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**

## CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

There is a secure entrance into the center.

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**

109.9(1)b: All files contain a pre-employment physical exam report completed within six months prior to hire and at least every three years. Physical exams shall be documented on form 470-5152, Child Care Provider Physical Examination Report.  The director stated that the employee had an appointment set to complete a physical.

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

N/A.

**5. Special Notes/Recommendations**

Programming space is new this year and has one year to complete radon testing. The new programming space is located within the school building.

Date: 10/25/2025

HHS Licensing Consultant: Maggie Gibson

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**.