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

Name of Center: Growing Patch Summer Camp **Enrollment:** 37 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 51812

Street: 202 W Main ST **City:** Urbana Iowa **Zip** 52345 **County:** Benton

Mailing Address: 700 South ST, Urbana, IA, 52345

Director's Name: Jennifer Liedtke **Phone Number:** 319-343-0472

On-Site Supervisor(s): Nicole Hellberg, Austin Dougherty, Makalia Dircks, Jamee Wiebold **E-Mail:** growingpatch2017@gmail.com

Date(s) of Visit: 06-07-2023

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

Date Inspected: 03-31-2022

Comments :

LICENSE TYPE: X **Child Care** **Preschool (ages 3-5 meets three hours or less per day)**

Financial Type: X Profit Non-Profit NA

Accredition: Accredited NAEYC NSACA Other X NA

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

Get-Well Evening Care Special Needs

SCHEDULE: Year-round School-Year X Summer Only

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General				50	50
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 08-01-2022 to 08-01-2024
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons **Date:** 06-28-2023

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

Not applicable.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

The Growing Patch Learning Center operates the following two programs throughout the community: The Growing Patch Learning Center (TGPLC) and Growing Patch Summer Camp (GPSC). Specifically, this license is for GPSC located inside Center Point Urbana Middle School which is part of the Center Point Community School District. The profit program commenced operations at this site on 5/31/2022. GPSC operates summer only, Monday through Friday 6:30am to 5:30pm. GPSC operates 12 weeks during summer 2023. The program offers childcare to school-age children. Current enrollment is 37.

Multi-site original founding owner and director is Jennifer Liedtke. Ms. Liedtke has a BS degree in secondary education, has a current State of Iowa teaching license, has over 10 years of experience working with children, and continues to participate in much child development related training. On-site supervisor (assistant director) Nicole Hellberg has over 10 years of experience working with children and continues to participate in much child development related training. On-site supervisor Austin Dougherty has completed 2 years of a 4 year degree in elementary and special education. Mr. Dougherty is a paraeducator with the local school, has over 3 years experience working with children and continues to participate in much child development related training. On-site supervisor Makalia Dircks has been employed by TGPLC since 2018, has child development related training, and continues to participate in much child development related training. On-site supervisor Jamee Wiebold has been employed by TGLP since 2019, has an AS degree in Early Childhood Education and continues to participate in much child development related training.

On 6/7/2023, program space was observed.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

TGPLC and GPSC offer a variety of early learning programming and childcare to help meet the needs of children and families in the community. TGPLC and GPSC are located in predominantly rural areas and accept a variety of funding sources. In March 2023, TGPLC celebrated their 6th year of business. GPSC commenced operations on 5/31/2022 and is currently celebrating staring their 2nd year of business. Congratulations!

TGPLC and GPSC sponsor a social media page for those in the community to learn more about their programs.

The mission of TGPLC and GPSC is "…to provide a safe, developmentally appropriate environment for infants, toddlers, preschool and school-aged children….focus is to provide a stimulating early care and educational experience which promotes each child's social/emotional, physical, and cognitive development…our goal is to support each child's desire to be lifelong learners."

TGPLC has a history of participation in quality initiatives including CACFP and IQ4K. A certificate of recognition acknowledging the program's support of CPU high school students during the 2022-2023 school-year was observed to be posted in the entryway of TGPLC. Ms. Liedtke discussed quality initiatives related to this 12-week summer only site.

Ms. Liedtke is a local entrepreneur invested in children and the community. Ownership and management (e.g. multi-site owner and director Ms. Liedtke, on-site supervisors) of TGPLC and GPSC has remained consistent. Management is organized, and in turn, TGPLC and GPSC operate smoothly. The programs have noteworthy systems of organization in place to help ensure administrative items are completed and maintained as required. Management team (e.g. Ms. Liedtke, Nicole Hellberg, Austin Dougherty, Makalia Dircks, Jamee Wiebold) is knowledgeable of licensing guidelines as well as their own program's policies and procedures.

Since the last monitoring visit, the program has retained seasoned staff as well as hired a few new ones. Ms. Liedtke reported having several staff with early childhood degrees and having all lead staff trained in PBIS. Ms. Liedtke talked about the program's onboarding of new employees within the first 90 days which includes required trainings as well as training in curriculum and CACFP. Staff professional growth was observed to exceed licensing requirements. Ms. Liedtke reported having 2 staff currently enrolled with TEACH pursuing early childhood degrees. Ms. Liedtke talked about how she is investing in her employees by encouraging professional goals, offering flexible scheduling whenever possible, offering competitive wages/benefits, incorporating a training based pay scale, displaying staff appreciation whenever possible, and having teacher work/professional development days built into the year.

TGPLC and GPSC have emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. The programs successfully navigated through the 2019 Polar Vortex, 8/10/2020 Derecho Storm, 2023 summer air quality issues, and 2019 health (Covid-19) pandemic.

GPSC has a collaborative partnership with the school district. 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. The school kitchen is inspected at least annually by the health department. Since the last review, the program no longer needs to cater foods served to this site from their main location. GPSC has access to the school kitchen to prepare, store and serve foods. There is an AED on-site. Through a partnership with the school district, transportation to swimming lessons for school district children-students enrolled in GPSC is provided to a local swimming pool. Children enrolled in GPSC also have access to CPU summer school activities as needed. Management and staff talk favorably about the program's continued relationship with the school describing it as "excellent".

GPSC's primary space is located inside the school cafeteria and gymnasium. As a result, the program is able to offer regular large gross motor activities even on inclement weather days. Curriculum is described as invigorating and teacher-inspired with a balance of physical, creative, and fun-filled activities in a relaxing and nurturing environment. Daily schedule supports small group work, outdoor learning, journaling/literacy, and time for children to display field trip thank-you. Curriculum also incorporates off-site field trip experiences (e.g. local baseball game, nature center, local bowling, roller skating, picnics in the park), on-site guest speaker events (e.g. CPU Theater Camp, master gardeners, recycling personnel), enrichment activities (e.g. gardening, math, literacy, crafts), and themed days.

Specific 2023 summer theme is "Hollywood". Each week has a unique cinema theme highlighting a character trait which is then incorporated in the week's small group work, group games, cook experiences, and crafts. The week of this monitoring visit was themed "Happy Feet 2" with the week's activities to include ice cube races, orange floats, igloo (marshmallow) building, penguin poster craft, bowling, child cooking snack of penguin crackers and roller "skating" field trip. Prior week's experiences incorporated the movie "Sing", the importance of using one's imagination, and an on-site DJ experience. Ms. Liedtke discussed how the program has also moved to the use of small groups known as "color families" which are defined by same color water bottles, clip boards, t-shirts and so on. Ms. Liedtke talked about how there's regular light-hearted competitiveness referred to as "color wars" in which all children are encouraged to participate, enjoy themselves and compete for some prizes. Ms. Liedtke indicated the program has increased enrollment and continues to receive positive family feedback.

GPSC continues efforts at optimal communication between the program/staff and families. The program is establishing an organized parent-staff/program information center, has a place to display children's accomplishments (including artwork) for families to enjoy, offers regular program newsletters, utilizes technological communication resources, and supports family programming activities.

TGPLC and GPSC collaborate well with community partners including Child Care Resource and Referral, local AEA, local school district, local businesses, city recreational department, and health professionals.

TGPLC and GPSC support a safe shoe (closed-toe) policy to encourage ease of play both in and outdoors.

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. This program has policies and procedures in place for hand washing, cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting. Staff were able to verbalize and engage in these processes.

On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were nurturing and attentive to the children's needs. Activities observed included morning arrival with self-selected gathering activities, morning food service, a tornado drill, and group viewing of a clip

from the week's cinema experience "Happy Feet 2". Staff provided a companionable presence allowing children to have many choices in their play experiences. Routine transitions (e.g. clean up activities, breakfast rituals) worked smoothly into the program's welcoming and cooperative play environment. Staff were overheard providing children with many words of encouragement and engaging children in much meaningful discussion. 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:

Ensure documentation of a monthly fire drill, monthly tornado drill and monthly outdoor play area inspection are available to review for at least the current and previous years.

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The program's license remains in full status. 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.