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

Name of Center: KinderCare West #291 **Enrollment:** 105 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 24451

Street: 310 Burdette DR SW **City:** Cedar Rapids Iowa **Zip** 52404 **County:** Linn

Mailing Address: 310 Burdette DR SW, Cedar Rapids, IA, 52404

Director's Name: Amanda White **Phone Number:** 319-396-5391

On-Site Supervisor(s): Carli Eichelberger, Amelia Berns **E-Mail:** 300291@klcorp.com
Amanda.White@kindercare.com

Date(s) of Visit: 02-13-2023

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

Date Inspected: 02-08-2023

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 X NAEYC NSACA Other NA

Program Serves: X Infants (0-23 mo.) X 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	26	31	38	10	105
Summer					0

QRS Rating: 4

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 04-01-2022 to 04-01-2024
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons **Date:** 02-16-2023

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

Not applicable.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

KinderCare West #291 is part of the national KinderCare Education enterprise. KinderCare Learning Centers were founded in 1969 and have continued to provide childcare programming for over 53 years. KLC provides educational programs for children from six weeks to 12 years old. These nationwide educational programs include over 1,000 early childhood education community centers, over 500 before-and-after school programs, and over 100 employer sponsored centers in 38 states and the District of Columbia. KinderCare Education enrolls approximately 200,000 children and employs approximately 30,000 people nationwide. This report pertains specifically to KinderCare West #291. KinderCare West #291 has been in operation for many years. KinderCare West #291 operates year-round, Monday through Friday 6:30am to 6:00pm. The profit program serves primarily infants through preschool-age children. Current enrollment is 105.

Director of KinderCare West #291 is Amanda White. Ms. White has been the director of this site since November 2022. Ms. White has been with KinderCare for over 7 years including being the assistant director/on-site supervisor since December 2019. Ms. White has a BA degree in biology, several years experience working with children and continues to participate in much child development related training.

On 2/13/2023, program space was observed.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

KinderCare West #291 is located in a predominantly urban neighborhood. The profit program provides a variety of full-time and part-time learning opportunities as well as accepts many different of funding sources to help meet the needs of children and families throughout the community.

KinderCare West #291 has established the following website for families and the community to learn more about the program: http://www.kindercare.com/our-centers/cedar-rapids/ia/300292.

The mission of this KinderCare is "…to provide programs and environments that enrich children's development, promote respect for children, and celebrate the joy of childhood".

KinderCare West #291 has a history of participating in quality initiatives including a national accreditation, QRS, CACFP and local quality initiatives. The program has achieved NAEYC accreditation through 7/1/2024 and obtained QRS 4-star. Ms. White discussed future goals of continued participation in quality initiatives.

Since the last review, KinderCare West #291 obtained a new director Amanda White. Ms. White has been an employee of KinderCare for over 7 years, and prior to moving into the director position, had been the assistant director/on-site supervisor for almost 3 years. Congratulations on your longevity and director role! The KinderCare West #291 management team (e.g. Ms. White, on-site supervisors) is organized and has noteworthy systems of organization in place to help ensure administrative items are completed as required and maintained in a secure manner. As a result, the program experiences smooth daily operations. The management team is knowledgeable of licensing guidelines as well as their own program's

policies and procedures. Ms. White discussed the collaboration that is done among local as well as national KinderCare sites that allows for a sharing of materials, curriculum, ideas/planning, professional development and various cohorts. Ms. White reported being part of a cohort to prepare for renewal of NAEYC accreditation. Ms. White discussed future business goals related to increasing family-program and staff-program engagement.

Since the last monitoring visit, the program has retained as well as hired some new staff. Ms. White discussed how the program uses a group chat App for staff and management teams to "Shout Out" to one another by sharing successes and unique programming ideas with one another. Ms. White talked about how KinderCare made 2022 the "Year of the Teacher" with KinderCare offering more training opportunities, new retention incentives, additional teacher appreciation/acknowledgment, continued family/staff referral/incentive program, continued no cost staff educational development, and the continued partnerships with the TEACH and WAGE$ programs. Ms. White reported one teacher is currently participating in TEACH while many staff are utilizing WAGE$. Noteworthy - Valentine's Day inspired "what we love out our teachers"! Ms. White discussed being proud of how staff are connecting with one another including a recent outside of work puppy exchange. Ms. White talked about wanting to increase opportunities for staff engagement and to "feel like a family" through potlucks, fun outside of work team events, and the future creation of a staff break area. While on-site one staff shared with licensing "...I love to work here and I don't want to feel as though I ever just need to work here..."

KinderCare West #291 has emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. The program successfully navigated through the 2008 historic Linn County flood, the 8/10/2020 Derecho Storm event and 2019 pandemic.

KinderCare West #291 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 (e.g. unique "Grow Me App"), and supports family programming activities. The program does offer family events throughout the year including open houses, parent/program conferences, access to 2 new family ambassadors/teams, and program/parent "Care Calls". Ms. White talked about recently adding a vestibule coffee bar for parents/families.

To help ensure the building remains sanitary and hazard free each day, KinderCare has maintenance persons (e.g. indoor and outdoor) who assist in maintaining the property. Since the last review, the vestibule area, office space and laundry room have been refreshed (e.g. cleaned, painted, organized, new rails for new car seat storage area). New flooring was also installed in the staff restroom. Ms. White discussed how new name-to-face child supervision records/forms were established and being implemented. Ms. White reported KinderCare West #291 is part of a test pilot to try new menus (e.g. waffles, dumplings, ravioli), foods, and recipes. Ms. White acknowledged receiving favorable feedback related to differing and new menu and food options. Ms. White also talked about how overall center cleanliness has been a priority.

Classrooms continue to be arranged in a thoughtful manner with learning at the forefront. Children's accomplishments (e.g. artwork) are displayed throughout the program space. Materials are accessible to children. Ms. White talked about using funds received from quality initiatives to replace many any furnishings (e.g. shelves, wooden chairs) as well as infant room flooring. Ms. White discussed future goals to unclutter the environment and increase outdoor areas of shade. Curriculum includes a combination of learning strategies incorporating KinderCare's unique curriculum, teacher-created ideas, social emotional learning, early academics, and physical activity to nurture healthy bodies, happy hearts, and growing minds. Curriculum also incorporates on-site guest speaker events (e.g. Iowa State Extension dietician), themed days, and holiday/seasonal parties. Communication between children and staff is done verbally, with picture cues, and through sign language. Ms. White reported a future plan of restarting KinderCare's Learning Adventures enrichment opportunities which have historically included additional experiences in music, phonics, art, cooking, and STEM.

KinderCare West #291 collaborates well with community partners including the local school districts, early access persons, local businesses, CCR&R, other childcare programs/directors, NAEYC administration and health professionals. KinderCare West #291 continues to partner with the Cedar Rapids Community School District to provide a 4-year-old statewide voluntary preschool program as well as receive some transportation services.

The infant room has a “no shoe” policy and was observed supporting safe sleep practices.

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 in various areas onsite.

On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were nurturing and attentive to the children's needs. Areas of study included winter, healthy bodies, and light and dark. Activities observed throughout the classrooms were many (e.g. infant cares, group discussion with book reading, finger plays, center play opportunities, food service routines). Children had access to an array of materials (e.g. books, imaginative play options, building materials, sensory, puzzles, games, crafts) that encouraged

innovative play with opportunities for problem solving and creativity. Staff provided a companionable presence allowing children to have many choices in their play experiences. Staff were overheard providing children with many words of encouragement, offering positive redirection when needed, 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:

Replace the damaged stained diaper stations located in the infant room.

Ensure lesson plans are updated in each room (4yo preschool room).

Review with and remind all staff the need to store personal items in inaccessible areas (purses in 4yo preschool room), the need for staff and children to hand wash after each diaper change or restroom event (young infant room), the need for staff and children to hand wash prior to food service (older infant rooms), the need to not use diaper changing surfaces as storage, and the need to not set cot/nap time materials out too early prior to use (4yo preschool room).

Food service rituals were observed in the 12-18mo room and 18-24mo room. The duration of time older infants were required to remain at food tables and remain in the room without access to supplies or activities prior to lunch was excessive and not developmentally appropriate. Children in the 18-24mo room were observed wandering the room with staff sitting and repeatedly verbally redirecting the children to not climb on furniture. When asked about this, staff reported they were waiting for lunch which was to be served in about 25 minutes. When staff were asked to engage in activities with the children during the interim, licensing observed staff unlock child books from an upper cabinet. When asked about this, staff reported the children "just tare the books" or denied knowing where they could find books to put in the room's library center. Management and licensing discussed how moving forward, opportunities for mentoring, modeling and training will be offered to those staff particularly during the transition times.

Licensing strongly recommends checklists to help on-site supervisors, the assistant director and staff know how to manage time including transition time (e.g. regular child restroom checks).

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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.