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

Name of Center: Collins Aerospace Day Academy **Enrollment:** 284 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 24371

Street: 1215 Skylee Blvd NE **City:** Cedar Rapids Iowa **Zip** 52402 **County:** Linn

Mailing Address: 400 Collins Rd NE MS 167-100Rockwell Collins Inc, Cedar Rapids, IA, 52498

Director's Name: Miranda Niemi **Phone Number:** 319-295-4440

On-Site Supervisor(s): Shelly Ness, Assistant Director **E-Mail:** miranda.niemi@collins.com

Date(s) of Visit:

X **Licensing Visit** X **Unannounced Visit** **Off Year Visit** X **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: 05-29-2024

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 NAEYC NSACA Other X 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	108	52	142	60	362
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 02-01-2025 to 02-01-2027
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons **Date:** 03-24-2025

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

Not applicable.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

Collins Aerospace Day Academy (CADA) is located in a predominately urban area. Since opening in 1986, CADA has underwent many changes in ownership, management, name, size, and location. CADA operates year-round Monday through Friday 6:30am to 5:30pm. The program serves infant through school-age children. Current enrollment is 284.

Owners of CADA are Paul and Miranda Niemi. Miranda Niemi has been the director of CADA since 2014, and during 2025, she will be celebrating her 11th year as director of this program. Congratulations! Ms. Niemi has a MA degree in early childhood education and a BA degree in elementary education and teaching. She is a seasoned director, is an approved childcare trainer, is a local community college professor, has held IAEYC board positions, has a history of being a consultant for a local quality initiative, and provides mentoring assistance to many local childcare programs. Ms. Niemi has a history of participating in numerous educational committees, early childhood boards and cohorts (e.g. Public Policy Forum Committee, Linn County Children Coalition, Childcare Solutions Group, The Iowa Women's Foundation, Linn County Perception of Childcare Group) throughout the local community. In 2017, Ms. Niemi was the recipient of the Chris Carman Award.

On 2/25/25 and 2/26/25, program space was observed.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

CADA is located in a predominantly urban area offering many different childcare and early learning opportunities to meet the needs of families and children throughout the community.

CADA has the following website for persons to learn more about the program: https://collinsaerospacedayacademy.com/.

CADA philosophy is "...dedicated to maintaining a quality learning atmosphere, and we strive to provide activities which allow for optimal developmental progress of each child in social, emotional, cognitive, language, literacy, math, science, physical growth and the arts..."

CADA has a history of participation in quality initiatives. In 2019, CADA was invited to the White House for the 2019 Childcare Summit. In October 2019, the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation (https://www.forwardontalent.org/stories/collins-aerospace/), featured CADA as a nationwide example of "shared services" in which a business helped establish a high-quality childcare and early education support for its employees and, when possible, the broader community. Ms. Niemi continues to consult with others who are interested in providing shared services in their communities.

Paul and Miranda Niemi are local entrepreneurs investing in childcare as well as the local community. The program's owners and management team are professional and organized, and in turn, daily operations run smoothly. Management has noteworthy systems of organization in place to help ensure administrative items are completed as required and maintained in a secure manner. Management is knowledgeable of licensing guidelines as well as their own program's policies and

procedures.

Since the last monitoring visit, CADA has retained many seasoned staff. Throughout the classrooms staff reported celebrating 16 years, 12 years, 11 years, 3 years, and 4 months with the program. Congratulations! Staff longevity is impressive. CADA acknowledges staff successes as well as encourages staff to pursue professional goals through participation in the Teach and Wage$ programs. Notes of gratitude and thanks towards staff were observed in various areas of the center.

CADA continues efforts at optimal communication between the program/staff and families. The program has an organized parent-staff/program information center, offers regular program newsletters, utilizes technological communication resources, and supports family programming activities (e.g. "Backpack Connection") and activities (e.g. fall fest, spring fling, graduation). CADA has an active parent advisory council.

Building and grounds are well-maintained. The building includes lactation rooms with hand washing sinks, an employee break room with computer stations, indoor large gross motor rooms, storage areas, laundry area, a conference room, and numerous staff/visitor restrooms. The center additionally has many notable safety features including tamper resistant receptacles and door hinge finger shield guards. The kitchen is spacious, sanitary and very well-organized. In June 2023, the program obtained a new dedicated food service lead who has prior experience from preparing foods for a local school district.

Classrooms continue to be arranged in a thoughtful manner with learning at the forefront. Ms. Niemi talked about a goal of ensuring each room has access to a secure medication storage box. Children's accomplishments (e.g. artwork, milestone art) are displayed throughout the program space. Materials are accessible to children. CADA continues to use the Frog Street Curriculum which offers a specific individualized curriculum for every age and stage of development from birth to age five. Frog Street's early childhood education curriculum offers developmental and learning continuums that allow children to build on previously mastered skills to more readily achieve new skills in a seamless and continuous way. Curriculum also continues to support a variety of learning experiences including STEAM programming, social emotional leaning, kindergarten readiness, on-site guest speaker events (e.g. librarian, nutritionist), teacher inspired ideas and music activities. Summer 2025 registration was noted as being well underway. Ms. Niemi discussed how since the last review, each child file now included a separate developmental section.

CADA continues to collaborate with many community partners including local school districts, local businesses, CCR&R, and health professionals. CADA continues to partner with local colleges (e.g. Kirkwood Community College) and high schools to provide a hands-on learning environment for students interested in a career working with children.

CADA has emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. CADA has successfully navigated through the Linn County 2008 flood, 2019 winter Polar Vortex, 2019 health (covid-19) pandemic, 8/10/20 Derecho Storm, 2021 food supply issues, 2022 infant formula shortages, 2023 air quality alerts and 7/19/24 global technology outage.

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 as well as hand washing. Cleaning reminders and supplies were observed on-site.

On the days of the monitoring visit, staff were nurturing and attentive to the children's needs. Areas of study included places kids go, architecture and insects. Children had access to an array of materials that encouraged innovative play. Activities observed were many (e.g. infant cares, center play experiences, group discussions, small group work, book reading, music with movement, large gross motor activities). Staff provided a companionable presence allowing children to have many choices in their play experiences. Staff were observed communicating with children verbally, using picture cues, and through sign language. Routine transitions (e.g. restroom breaks, clean-up, food service rituals, nap time preparations) worked smoothly into the program's welcoming and cooperative play environment. Staff were overheard engaging with children in meaningful discussion, using positive director when needed, and encouraging the use of 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:

The outdoor play spaces have significant areas of soft wet earth and mud making it difficult for children to enjoy regular

outdoor play. Remedy.

Continue to ensure tall cabinets (including metal cabinets) and/or shelves are secured throughout the center.

Please consider adding a child friendly wall mirror into each classroom. During the monitoring visit, licensing observed several children to be greatly enjoying free-style dancing in areas where each could see a bit of reflection.

Continue to periodically review illness policy and procedures with all staff and families.

A full license is issued. Thank you for the visit.

This report is to note an administrative change. Total capacity has changed to 362.

*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.