Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Prairie Rose Montessori School

Provider No.: 52456

Address: 6203 Chancellor DR, Cedar Falls, IA, 50613

County: Black Hawk

Director's Name: Gretchen Koinzan

On-Site Supervisor: Gretchen Koinzan

Phone Number: 3192602208

E-Mail: prairierosemontessori@gmail.com

HHS Visit Date: 07/22/2026

Licensing Period: 08/01/2026 to 08/01/2028

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 04/23/2026

Comments:

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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HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday	7:15 AM to 5:30 PM		
Tuesday	7:15 AM to 5:30 PM		
Wednesday	7:15 AM to 5:30 PM		
Thursday	7:15 AM to 5:30 PM		
Friday	7:15 AM to 5:30 PM		
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

- [X] Infant(0-<24 Months)
- [X] Toddler
- [X] PreSchool
- [ ] School Age
- [ ] All Ages

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	0	10	20	0	30
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

On 07/22/26 I made an unannounced licensing visit to Prairie Rose Montessori School in Cedar Falls. I met with Gretchen Koinzan, the director and lead guide/teacher. She completed the North American Montessori Training. She was previously a director at a different Montessori school in Cedar Falls that closed and she has several years of experience as a Montessori lead teacher. Jory Wotherspoon is the lead guide in the Toddler classroom. Ms. Wotherspoon is enrolled in the Infant Toddler (0-3) Montessori Certification Program. The program employs six staff members in addition to Ms. Koinzan during the summer and seven staff members during the school year.

Prairie Rose Montessori School is in a free standing building in an industrial area of Cedar Falls. The program was given permission to open on 04/23/24. The program operates Monday through Friday from 7:15 am until 5:30 pm. It serves children aged 18 months old through preschool (age 6). The Toddler classroom serves children who are eighteen months old until they turn three. The Children's House serves children who are three through Six-years-old. Ther are currently 28 children enrolled.

The Montessori philosophy is "founded on the premise that all young children pass through a well-defined sequence of steps to maturity, but at different rates of growth and in different ways. Growth is as individual as each child. Advancement within a child varies from skill to skill." Montessori respects individual differences that are natural to the child. A child has a deep need for purposeful, concrete work. A child learns most effectively when the learning experience emphasizes the process of learning rather than the outward products most traditionally emphasized in education.

The program operates out of three rooms. The older children have a larger classroom and this is where the dining area is located. The toddler students operate out of two smaller rooms at the front of the building. An inspection of each room was

completed.

The subject areas in the Montessori classroom include Daily Living, Sensorial, Mathematics, Language, Science, Geography, Art, Music and Computer. Centers/works are established in each of these areas and children move at their own pace. The area was arranged so there was plenty of space for the children to move between activities. Materials were in good order and offered a lot of choices and variety for the children. The classroom is equipped with specially designed and sequenced materials.

The curriculum is based on the Montessori philosophy. This year the summer camp theme is Book Club and each week they focus on a different author or subject. They have a new book each day. During the school year they have a monthly theme, such as continents and then they build on that concept. Children are allowed to move freely between areas and teachers use direct instruction to teach them. A typical day includes small group time, works, vocabulary and reviewing colors and shapes. The Children's House uses a Readiness Observation Checklist and student progress reports are completed.

The program uses the Brightwheel app to communicate with parents.

There are two bathrooms located between the two primary classrooms. Each bathroom has one toilet and one sink. There are also a changing table and a sink outside of the bathrooms. Handwashing procedures were posted in the bathrooms. Handwashing procedures must be posted near the sink in the same area as the diaper changing table. Diaper changing procedures were posted.

Ms. Koinzan states the Montessori method has staff members change children while they are standing up but they have a changing table in case it is necessary.

The program uses Purell Surface Sanitizer to sanitize food tables. The program uses Zep Commercial Quick Clean Disinfectant to disinfect the changing table. The disinfectant has a dwell time of two minutes.

As part of the Montessori method, children are offered naps. Roll-up mats are used to nap in the Children's House. Cots are used for the Toddler classroom.

There was a phone in the office and emergency numbers with the school's address and phone number were posted. The emergency posting was also in the classrooms. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and evacuation diagrams were posted by the main program doors and outdoor exits in the program. A daily schedule was posted.

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. I reviewed documentation of monthly playground inspections. Radon testing was completed in June 2025 and is good for five years. Results were within EPA guidelines. The annual fuel burning inspection was completed and no concerns were noted. The carbon monoxide detectors are part of the fire system on the ceilings. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 04/23/26.

The program provides a morning snack at 9:30 am, an afternoon snack at 2:00 pm and a snack for children who stay late at 4:15 pm. The children bring their own lunch each day. Lunches are monitored to make sure they meet the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines. In the Children's House classroom, the children come get their snacks on their own time and clean up after themselves, as part of the Montessori method. Staff members portion out the snack. In the Toddler classroom they do staff assisted family style for snacks. A snack menu is maintained. The use a four week rotation of menus. They always serve a fruit and a grain. They make changes to the menu as they discover what the children like and do not like.

In the dining area food items were stored according to NHSPS guidelines. There is a refrigerator and thermometers were present. There is a water dispenser in the dining area and the children get their own water. The program also placed a filter on the sink in the classroom so the children can have cleaner drinking water. There are two sinks in the dining area. Handwashing procedures were posted. The Children's House students use disposable products. The Toddler classroom teachers wash dishes using the three step method.

The parent information is located on a bulletin board inside the entrance. The mandatory reporter information was posted. The child care consultant and the handbook availability were posted. The license was conspicuously hung.

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The school has a fenced-in outdoor play area/classroom. The area is completely natural and does not require fall surfacing. A large area has turf because grass would not grow, but there is also a small grassy area. There are two small sand areas and steppingstones. There is an area for transportation, woodworking, sensory play with dirt and woodchips and water play. There is an art area. There is a practical living area (dramatic play) and pushing and riding toys. There is a tarp over a table where the children can do crafts. There are picnic tables and a bench for the children to rest. Trees provide shade. A water cooler is outside in case the children are thirsty. The center has water play on Fridays.

Staff and children's files were reviewed at the time of the licensing visit. I reviewed six children files. Files must contain emergency contact information for the doctor and dentist of each child. The doctor's and dentist's name, phone number and complete street address must be provided. One file did not provide dental emergency information and one had an outdated physical. There was not a pattern of disregard so this will not be cited. Children files are maintained in Brightwheel.

I reviewed two staff files. They were in great condition.

I reviewed policy and procedures, staff and parent handbooks. The necessary written emergency procedures and policies were present. Emergency Preparedness Plans have been completed.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

I visited the program during their summer camp. The children were enjoying outside time. They were having a water day. The children had the choice of participating in water play or other activities. Some were engaged in fee play, some of the children were working on a craft. They filled a small glass container that they decorated with stickers with Play-do and then added an artificial flower. Some of the children were engaged in play at the various centers on the playground. Staff members were spread out on the playground so they could supervise the entire area. They were moving around the space and actively engaged with the children. They were patient and allowed the children the flexibility to choose what they wanted to do. Staff members maintained open communication with one another. A staff member took a few children into the program at a time to change out of their swimsuits. Staff members were enthusiastic and provided the children with praise. Positive redirection was used when necessary. They encouraged the children to use their imaginations. A staff member was nurturing and reassuring with an upset child. They provided clear and easy to understand directions when it was time to clean up and go inside for lunch. Staff members modeled good manners.

Ms. Koinzan states they have a strong potty training program and they work with the parents because they need home support.

Ms. Koinzan states they are adding a new floor in the room for the younger children the last week of July.

Ms. Koinzan states they have strong relationships with the families they serve.

Ms. Koinzan states she works hard at enrolling children in the program with strong behaviors or that have been kicked out of other programs. She wants to help the parents and prepare the children for public school. She states she has involved AEA and Head Start in the process when necessary.

Ms. Koinzan states she states she works hard to hire good staff members and train them in the Montessori method.

Ms. Koinzan states they work on the "whole child". They work on independence, grace and courtesy. They use a "peace rose" and an upset child can hold the rose and express why they are upset and then they pass the rose to the other child to express why they are upset.

Ms. Koinzan states they teach body autonomy and teach children it is okay to say no. They work on social-emotional growth plus language, math and science.

Ms. Koinzan states they have a Montessori classroom during the school year and during the summer they offer weekly camps. They use the Montessori philosophy but mostly provide an outside experience this year. She thinks next year they will offer more classroom time. During the summer they have a different theme each day. Monday is Messy Makers, Tuesday is Toy Share Day, Wednesday is water day, Thursday is Talent Day and Friday is a fun day. The activities are based around the weekly summer camp theme.

Ms. Koinzan states they bring presenters to the program. They also have Kindermusik visit once each week during the school year.

Ms. Koinzan states she gives a lot of time and devotion to the families and children. She wants them to know they come first. She believes in flexibility while also providing a safe place for children.

Ms. Koinzan states they offer a multi-cultural environment and diversity.

Ms. Koinzan has worked very hard over the last two years to learn licensing standards. She had a terrific visit.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

There are no citations.

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

N/A

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

A full license is issued. All DHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period.

Targeted Assessment: Behavior Management:
I discussed with Ms. Koinzan oversight of behavior management related to helping childcare staff: 1) Understand expectations, 2) managing frustrations, 3) monitor performance. Ms. Koinzan states this summer she has enough staff members that she is in the office more and she can step into a classroom or outside if necessary. Ms. Koinzan states the Montessori philosophy helps deal with behavior management. She states the staff members are already trained to observe and "read the room". Staff members are taught to talk to the children and use calm voices. Give instructions for the expectations but do not force anything and step away. Staff members are taught not to stand over the child and allow them "save face" and do the right thing. Ms. Koinzan states if the behaviors continue a staff member will intervene and offer the child two choices that lead to the result they want, but the child gets to decide which choice they want. They use grace and courtesy lessons.

Ms. Koinzan states they will remove a child from the classroom if it is absolutely necessary, not as punishment but to allow the child to get all their emotions out without disrupting the other children. They will talk with them after the child calms down. She states the Montessori philosophy naturally builds in patience. They have a variety of solutions to pull from. They build trust with the child but the child also knows they will not let them "get away" with anything. She states staff members know they can tap out and take a break if they are frustrated.

Ms. Koinzan states she monitors by being in the room and the space is small enough to hear everything

Date: 07/30/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Becky Frost

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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**.