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

Name of Center: Mount Vernon Community Preschool **Enrollment:** 38 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 25093

Street: 304 1st ST W **City:** Mount Vernon Iowa **Zip** 52314 **County:** Linn

Mailing Address: 304 1ST W, Mount Vernon, IA, 52314

Director's Name: Ellen Mueller **Phone Number:** 319-895-6286

On-Site Supervisor(s): Ellen Mueller **E-Mail:** mvcommunitypreschool@gmail.com

Date(s) of Visit: 11-08-2023

X **Licensing Visit** X **Unannounced Visit** **Off Year Visit** **Administrative Change**

LICENSING VISITS

New Application X **Re-Application** **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: 12-09-2020

Comments :

LICENSE TYPE: **Child Care** X **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: Infants (0-23 mo.) 2 Years X Preschool-Age School-Age

Get-Well Evening Care Special Needs

SCHEDULE: Year-round X School-Year Summer Only

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General			60		60
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 12-01-2023 to 12-01-2025
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons **Date:** 12-05-2023

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

Not applicable.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

Mount Vernon Community Preschool has been in operation for 58 years. The non-denominational preschool is located inside the United Methodist Church. Mt. Vernon Preschool operates school-year only Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 11:00am. The program serves preschool-age children. Current enrollment is 38.

Ms. Mueller has been the director of the Mount Vernon Community Preschool since May, 2020. Ms. Mueller has a BA degree in elementary education, over 7 years of experience working with children, and continues to participate in much child development related training.

On 11/8/2023, program space was observed.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

Mount Vernon Community Preschool is a well established program offering a choice of preschool services to help meet the educational needs of families and children. Mount Vernon Community Preschool has been in operation since 1965 and is currently celebrating their 58th year of operations. Congratulations!

Mount Vernon Community Preschool sponsors a private social media page for enrolled families.

Mount Vernon Community Preschool has a long history of participating in quality initiatives including local quality initiatives. Prior awards include a certificate for cooperation with Linn County Health Department by conducting a lead screening clinic at their facilities and a certificate for cooperation with Linn County Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program in promoting the health of Linn County children.

Ownership and management of the program has remained consistent. Ms. Mueller is celebrating her 3rd full year as director of this program. Ms. Mueller is a director-member of NAEYC. Ms. Mueller is organized, and in turn, the program experiences smooth daily operations. Ms. Mueller has noteworthy systems of organization in place to help ensure administrative items to be completed as required and maintained in a confidential manner. Staff are aware of licensing rules as well as their own program's policies and procedures.

Mount Vernon Community Preschool continues to retain seasoned staff. All teachers have degrees in child development, education and/or special education. Each teacher also has additional experience either teaching in a school and/or other learning center. Staff reported celebrating 21 years and 3 years experience working with children. Staff longevity is impressive! Also, staff's passion for being able to provide early learning is clearly evidenced in the impressive implementation of daily lesson planning. Ms. Mueller discussed having a great appreciation for their staff acknowledging how they often complete trainings together as a team.

Mount Vernon Community Preschool is a mission of the United Methodist Church. The preschool operates under a board of directors and has a parent advisory council. Church administration and the board help ensure the children's space is sanitary

and hazard free each day. Ms. Mueller discussed how the church does include the preschool in their newsletter and how the partnership has and continues to flourish.

Mount Vernon Community Preschool has emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. The preschool successfully navigated through the 2008 Linn County flood, 2019 winter Polar Vortex, 2019 (health COVID) pandemic, 8/10/2022 Derecho Storm and 2023 air quality issues.

Mt. Vernon Community Preschool 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. Ms. Mueller discussed continued efforts to be able to offer some scholarship opportunities. Ms. Mueller talked about having a great group of families, with some traveling a distance for their children to be able to attend their preschool.

Building and grounds are well-maintained. Since the last review, the outer building wall was redone replacing windows, countertops and storage along that side. The preschool also obtained new child tables and chairs as well as some new leaning materials. Classrooms continue to be arranged in a thoughtful manner with learning at the forefront. Materials are accessible to children. Curriculum happens through play, is individualized, and is based upon each child's unique learning style. Curriculum incorporates literacy, science and math investigation activities (e.g. cooking activities, letter recognition writing) and also supports music which encourages rhythm, movement and singing. The Mount Vernon Community Preschool offers a variety of program/family events throughout each school-year including preschool orientation for families and children, parent-teacher conferences, fall party with local business trick-or-treating, Valentine exchange, preschool at the pumpkin patch day, and story time at Cole Library excursions,.

Mt. Vernon Community Preschool partners well with community agencies, local businesses, various school districts, local higher education entities, CCR&R and health professionals. Ms. Mueller discussed a collaboration with the Lions Club to be able to offer vision screenings. The preschool has also been featured in the Mount Vernon - Lisbon Sun local newspaper highlighting preschool events and unique offerings.

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, cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting. Staff were able to verbalize and engage in these processes. Cleaning checklists and daily sanitation reminders were observed to be posted in various areas of the center.

On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were nurturing and attentive to the children's needs. Activities offered to peak child interest were many including small group water color work, unique Big Top circus magnets, clock puzzle, large gross motor low-to-ground balancing work, dramatic play (e.g. The joy of cooking hamburgers! An elaborate effort holding and caring for babies!), building, cupcake color/shape matching, and sorting horses in the stables. A very comfy and inviting literacy area was observed to be greatly enjoyed as one student chose to go back a few times to explore the "Duck on a Bike" book! Many one-on-one teacher-student interactions were observed that included warm discussions as to what each was accomplishing, offering reassurances with hugs and encouraging social graces. Routine transitions (e.g. clean up activities, snack rituals) worked smoothly into the program's welcoming and cooperative play environment. A clever group experience incorporating a "hide-and-seek mouse" was observed to be greatly enjoyed by the children as all waited eagerly for a turn to let out an exclamation as to whether the mouse had been found! Staff provided a companionable presence allowing children to have many choices in their preschool day. 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:

A full license is issued. 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.