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

Name of Center: Caring Corner Christian Daycare & Preschool **Enrollment:** 80 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 23658

Street: 5200 Northland AVE NE **City:** Cedar Rapids Iowa **Zip** 52402 **County:** Linn

Mailing Address: 5200 Northland AVE NE, Cedar Rapids, IA, 52402

Director's Name: Megan Waterman **Phone Number:** 319-377-8490

On-Site Supervisor(s): LaTonya Chalmers **E-Mail:** mwaterman@thechurchonnorthland.com

Date(s) of Visit: 02-13-2025

X **Licensing Visit** X **Unannounced Visit** **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: 07-01-2024

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	21	20	74	163	278
Summer					0

QRS Rating: 3

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:** 02-17-2025

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

Not applicable.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

Caring Corner Christian Daycare and Preschool (CDP) is a non-profit program which was established in 2003. During it's history, the childcare program did undergo a relocation in August, 2016. Caring Corner CDP is currently located inside The Church on Northland First Baptist Church - Church of the Brethern. The program offers full-time and part-time childcare for infant through school-age children. Current enrollment is 80.

The director of this program is Megan Waterman. Ms. Waterman has been the director since October 2023. Ms. Waterman has a BA in business administration, over 10 years experience working with children, and continues to participate in much child development related training. Ms. Waterman is also a current member of the Linn County Early Childhood Iowa (ECI) Governance Board. On-site supervisor LaTonya Chalmers has been in the position since July 2016. Ms. Chalmers has an AA degree in interdisciplinary studies, experience working with children and continues to participate in much child development related training. Curriculum director is Samantha Crumpton. Ms. Crumpton has a MA divinity degree and a BA degree in chemistry, mathematics and early childhood. Ms. Crumpton has been with Caring Corner since September 2023, has several years experience working with children and continues to participate in child development related training.

On 2/13/2025, program space was observed.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

Caring Corner CDP is a well established program offering many different early learning opportunities to help meet the needs of families and children throughout the community. The program is located in a predominantly urban area. The program accepts a variety of funding sources.

Caring Corner CDP has the following website for families and the community to learn more about their program: https://www.thechurchonnorthland.com/caring-corner.html.

Caring Corner CDP describes their curriculum as "...Biblical teachings are shared to lead the children to Jesus Christ and help them to grow in their understanding and faith in God. A well-rounded program for spiritual, academic, and social development for children ages 6 weeks to 12 years old...Kindergarten Readiness Program based on the principle Jesus stated in Matthew 19:14: "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these..."

Caring Corner CDP has a history of participation in quality initiatives including IQ4K, local quality initiatives and CACFP. The program has a current IQ4K 3-Star. Management discussed future goals related to continued participation in quality initiatives.

Ms. Waterman has been with Caring Corner CDP since August 2022 having moved into the director role in October 2023. Ms. Waterman is currently celebrating over 1 year in the director role. The program's seasoned management team (e.g. Ms. Waterman, Ms. Chalmers, Ms. Crumpton) continues to be 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. The management team is knowledgeable of licensing guidelines as well as their own program's policies and procedures.

Since the last monitoring visit, Caring Corner CDP has retained a core team of employees. Caring Corner CDP supports and encourages staff to further their education by supporting TEACH and WAGES. Ms. Waterman reported 1 staff has almost completed a BA degree through TEACH with 2 additional staff soon to start their professional growth journey with the help of TEACH. Several staff reported celebrating anniversaries with the program including 25 years, 24 years, 7 years, 6 years, 5 years, and 1 year. Staff longevity is impressive! It shall be noted Caring Corner CDP staff Jill P was a recipient of the 2021 Chris Carman Friend of Children Award which honored her ability to go above and beyond in preparing preschool children for kindergarten since 2000. Ms. Waterman talked about also having a solid team of summer staff which includes a returning school-year licensed teacher and school-year behavioral therapist. Ms. Waterman discussed how staff appreciation are part of the program's successful operations (e.g. staff birthday acknowledgment board, "go big" staff appreciation week with bank sponsoring teacher appreciation lunch, staff manicures). Ms. Waterman reported being proud of staff tenure and having a really amazing people to work with.

Caring Corner CDP is a ministry of the Church on Northland First Baptist Church - Church of the Brethren. The property is spacious, sanitary, and well-maintained. Church administration, church custodial staff, church maintenance personnel and the church board help ensure the program space is sanitary and hazard free each day. The space is ADA accessible and an AED machine is on-site. Volunteerism continues to be part of their program's success (e.g. outdoor playground and general maintenance, hosting open houses, food drives and book fairs). Food storage and food prep/materials are organized and properly maintained. Head chef has been employed with Caring Corner CDP for 14 years!

Caring Corner CDP has emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. Caring Corner CDP has successfully navigated through the 2008 historic Linn County 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.

Caring Corner CDP 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. Caring Corner CDP offers many unique experiences for children and families throughout the academic year and summer. These annual experiences have historically included guest speaker events (e.g. Bible study with a local Pastor, police pals, fire fighter pal, guest readers), extra enrichments (e.g. Sports Torts, Daytime Dancers), on-site "lending library", field trips, open houses, program/family conferences, Friendsgiving Lunch, holiday movie with pj party, Valentine's exchange, Halloween costume parade, Christmas program, Spring musical (e.g. 1970s TV shows with trivia), Mother's Day tea, preschool graduation celebration, and summer Vacation Bible School.

Upon entry, the vestibule area is warm and welcoming with a newly established "All About Me" area to celebrate and acknowledge staff. Classrooms continue to be arranged in a thoughtful manner with learning at the forefront. Children's accomplishments (e.g. artwork, Clever "love you to pieces"!) are displayed throughout the program space. Curriculum includes Creative Curriculum, Handwriting without Tears, Biblical teachings, and teacher inspired ideas. Curriculum helps prepare children to successfully and confidently enter kindergarten. Curriculum incorporates phonological awareness, phonics, math, science, sign-language, creative arts and music, with endless opportunities for choice, problem solving and creativity. Concepts such as math, science and literacy become more advanced in their pre-kindergarten classroom. Management acknowledged the continued on-site community garden project in which children annually engage in seed starting, transplanting, caring and cultivating foods and flowers. Upon peak season, foods and flowers are used in the childcare cooking projects as well as extras shared with families and local food pantries.

Caring Corner DCP collaborates well with local partners including local businesses, local school districts, health professionals, AEA - CART program, Tanager, and CCR&R. This program does provide transportation to and from several local school districts.

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. Staff were observed encouraging and engaging in hand washing at all levels. The program has policies and procedures in place for hand washing, diapering, cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting. Cleaning supplies as well as cleaning checklists/reminders were observed in various areas on-site.

On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were observed to be nurturing and attentive to the children's needs. The aroma of center made lunchtime mac-and-cheese could be smelled throughout the center while child friendly music played in various classrooms! Areas of study throughout the rooms included heart shape, Valentine's Day, the letter "K" and the color pink. Activities observed included infant cares, routine transitions (e.g. clean-up, restroom break) center play experiences (e.g. block building, creative imaginative play, Eric Carle game, puzzles, Magna Tiles, little people castles) and indoor large

gross motor play. Staff were overheard providing children with words of encouragement, offering positive redirection when needed and encouraging the use of social graces. Children responded well to staff and appeared to be enjoying their day.

IV. IDENTIFY THE ASPECTS OF OPERATION THAT FALL BELOW THE STANDARDS REVIEWED:

None noted.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Ensure secondary exits are unobstructed (e.g. snow).

Please ensure staff file reviewed (AG) has documentation of required physical form 470-5152.

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.