Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Graettinger-Terril Preschool

Provider No.: 52695

Address: 205 S Lincoln Ave, Graettinger, IA, 51342

County: Palo Alto

Director's Name: Jeremy Simington

On-Site Supervisor: Sara Hansen (lead teacher), Staci Girres (asst)

Phone Number: 7128593286

E-Mail: jsimington@gt.ratitans.org

HHS Visit Date: 10/06/2025

Licensing Period: 11/01/2024 to 11/01/2026

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 10/04/2024

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

- [ ] PTO
- [X] Licensing Visit
- [ ] Drop In
- [ ] Administrative Change

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

- [ ] Accrediation

Program Duration:

- [ ] Year-Round
- [X] School Year
- [ ] Summer Only

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Program Population Served:

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

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

1. Basic Overview

An unannounced visit was made to the Graettinger-Terril Preschool on 10-06-25 where I met with the school principal/director Jeremy Simington, and classroom lead teacher Sara Hansen. The program has been in operation in the past under the oversight of the Department of Education providing services to children with an Individualized Education Plan (EIP), but became licensed under DHHS in 2024 to allow for continuity of programming for years when there may not be a child under an IEP. The program offers a single session 3 year old preschool operating 4 days a week. There are currently 7 children enrolled in the program served by 2 teachers. All aspects of the program subject to licensing standards were reviewed during the visit.

The layout and design of the classroom remains the same as in prior visits. The program operates out of a single classroom in a wing of the Graettinger school building. The classroom has a secondary exit providing direct egress to the outdoors and an enclosed playground space. Windows along the exterior wall provide ample natural light, a view of the outdoors, and ventilation. A restroom is available directly from the classroom so that children do not need to leave the room. An additional sink is available in the room which can be used for handwashing, and/or food preparation. During the visit the water temperature of the sink in the restroom off the programming space was measured to be 132.5 deg. F. which exceeds the maximum allowable limit and can result in instant scald burns. The room has a large open floor plan which is divided into activity centers through the placement of furniture and play structures. Executive desks are arranged to define a teacher work space. The room is arranged so that there are no blind areas. The room was clean with no safety concerns related to maintenance noted. The toys and materials present in the classroom were observed to be in good repair and appropriate to the ages of the children.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

Good interactions were observed on the day of my visit. The teachers did follow the planned schedule moving from outdoor play, to self-directed center play, small group and individual skill assessment, and large group activities. The center uses the Creative Curriculum, and Launch Pad curriculums to establish lesson plans that focus on a general learning theme, and specific learning concepts of letters, and numbers that are emphasized through repetition and activities such as art/crafts, and journaling. Both teachers moved through the class joining the children in their play talking to them about what they were doing and helping them to build skills with reviewing counting, and asking questions or giving suggestions to help the children develop their cognitive thought processes. The teachers were observed to use positive behavioral support approaches to encourage appropriate behavior. This included the use of routines, specific tasks, and reminders of expected behavior. When behavioral issues did arise the teachers used simple redirection, and guided problem solving to help the children identify alternative options. Both teachers used positive and energetic tones of voice of when speaking with the

children but would use sterner tones when addressing behavioral concerns. The program has a very strong community focus with several high school students serving as volunteer mentors who assist in the class as part of their school program. In addition during the visit the county Sheriff came to visit the class and it was identified that this was not part of a specific curriculum activity but rather as a regular event.

The center does have good health and safety policies in place. The school custodial services are responsible for much of the facilities maintenance including cleaning but the teachers also sanitize tables and other surfaces as needed throughout the day. A deeper cleaning including disinfecting of toys, and laundering of bedding is done by the teachers on weekly intervals. Good handwashing practices were observed during the visit with the teachers directing the children to wash their hands after using the restroom, before meals, and other times they became soiled such as when blowing their nose. The teachers did provide assistance and supervision to ensure that the children washed their hands in an effective manner. During the visit one child did have a toileting accident and the teacher did follow good standing diapering procedure when assisting the child. Chemical cleaners, first aid kits, and personal belongings that could pose a risk to children were stored in areas where they were not readily accessible. There were not children taking any medications at the time of the visit but the program would make use of the school nurse if needed in the future to store and maintain medications. The parents provide sleeping mats, bags, and blankets for children that nap, and the program maintains some mats and items for children who's parents do not provide those items.

Lunch is prepared and served in the school cafeteria and follows the planned school menu. The class does follow the requirement of the Child and Adult Care Food Program ensuring that requirements such as providing reduced fat white milk are provided. While the children do eat at the same time as the high school students they do sit at a separate table. The teachers sit and eat with the children to provide supervision. Snacks are provided by the program and served in the classrooms. A limited selection of snack options are maintained in the classroom and good food storage and handling practices were observed.

As noted the classroom has a secondary exit that opens directly to the outdoors and a preschool playground space. The space is an inner courtyard enclosed by the building on 3 sides, and fenced on the 4th. The playground has a paved walk area, and an area with climbing structures and swings. The equipment was observed to be in good repair. Rubber mulch is used for fall surfacing and a good depth of material was present in fall zones. Shade is limited to that which would be provided by the buildings, and the equipment.

In reviewing administrative records all required notices for No Smoking, Mandatory Child Abuse Reporting, Consultant Contact, and the License Certificate were posted. It was noted that the license certificate was posted in the classroom by the teacher work desks and it was reviewed that this should be moved to the parent notice board with the other postings. Other required postings for emergency evacuation, emergency contact numbers, handwashing, daily schedule, and planned curriculum were also present. All child files were reviewed and found to contain all required information. Both staff files were reviewed. While background checks and physicals are maintained at the school district office in Terrill these were confirmed to have been completed in the prior and would be still be valid though as a reminder the Iowa SING background checks will need to be renewed for the next licensing visit. While both teachers do attend on-going professional development both still need to complete Essentials Of Child Care though do not need to complete subsections on Shaken Baby, and Safe Sleep. Inspection logs and certificates were current and valid for Radon Testing, Fuel Burning Appliances, and Playground inspections. The center does need to conduct and log monthly fire and tornado drills for the 3 year old classroom. When conducting emergency evacuation drills the class does not need to sound the alarm system, and can count those drills conducted quarterly for the school in general.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

109.8(1)a: All staff in ratio:At least sixteen years of age.Those staff persons who are under the age of 18 shall:Not be the sole provider on the premises Not provide transportation to children in care. If staff person under the age of 18 are providing care without an adult, they shall only provide care to school-aged children. May be utilized for brief periods of absence (not to exceed 5 minutes) and scheduled nap periods for children over two years of age
-- The program makes use of high school student volunteer mentors that are under 18 years of age. During the visit male volunteer mentors took the male children to the restrooms off the main corridor outside of the classroom without one of the classroom teachers accompanying them. While this was done in part to the school also serving general population adolescent students where school policies would prohibit the female teachers from entering the men's restroom a teacher was still required to accompany the children and volunteers to provide oversight.

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109.10(13)b: Emergency instructions, phone numbers, and diagrams for fire, tornado, and flood shall be visibly posted and documented at least once a month for fire and tornado. Records shall be maintained for current and previous year.
-- Emergency drills were only being conducted and logged when practiced by the school as a whole. Schools are required to practice drills sounding the alarms quarterly. While the preschool class can count those drills conducted by the school Licensing Standards require that emergency drills for both fire and tornado evacuation are practiced and logged monthly. Alarms are not required to be sounded for the additional monthly drills so that other school programming is not disrupted.

109.11(3)a: Center shall ensure that:Facility and premises are sanitary, safe, and hazard free.Sufficient lighting shall be provided.Sufficient ventilation.Sufficient heating.Sufficient cooling.Equipment placed in the program area is maintained so as not to result in injury to the children.
-- The water temperature of the handwashing sink in the restroom accessible from the preschool classroom was measured to be 132.5 deg. F. which can result in instant 2nd degree scald burns. Hot water temperatures need to be adjusted for sinks used for handwashing to no more than 120 deg. F. when measured at the spigot with only the hot water tap on.

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

The school maintenance department was informed of the concerns regarding the hot water temperatures of the handwashing sink available in the classroom the need to correct that issue. The center does have access to other sinks in the other restrooms located off the main corridors which do have mixer valves.

Prior the visit being made a call had been received with a concern that the center had refused enrollment of a child that was not fully toilet trained. It was noted that the program is using the same written polices for enrollment that are used for children enrolled under an IEP under QPPS requirements which does require that the center will provide assistance to children that are not fully toilet trained. It was reviewed that those children enrolled under an IEP are being provided care as part of an identified and diagnosed disability treatment plan overseen by the Department of Education. For children that are enrolled as part of the general 3 year old preschool overseen by DHHS Licensing Standards the center is able to establish enrollment criteria that would exclude children that are not fully toilet trained. It was discussed with Mr. Simington that the center should create a separate policy handbook that is specific to the 3 year old preschool programming overseen by DHHS. Information regarding required written policies and guidance in developing those policies has been provided to the program.

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

A full license will remain in effect at this time. Please provide a written response to the licensing consultant identifying a plan of action to correct and maintain those aspects cited as not meeting licensing standards and identifying an anticipated date of compliance. At least one visit will be made to the center during the next year.

Date: 10/15/2025

HHS Licensing Consultant: Ray Salsbury

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**.