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

Name of Center: Sugar Plum Preschool **Enrollment:** 28 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 21917

Street: 213 N Pennsylvania AVE **City:** Mason City Iowa **Zip** 50401 **County:** Cerro Gordo

Mailing Address: 213 N Pennsylvania AVE, Mason City, IA, 50401

Director's Name: Carol Jara (on-site) Tammy Hertzel (exec) **Phone Number:** 641-424-9316

On-Site Supervisor(s): **E-Mail:** sugarplum.preschool@hotmail.com

Date(s) of Visit: 02-07-2024, 02-22-2024

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 **State** X **Local** **NA** **Is Fire Inspection Approved?** X **Yes** **No** **NA**

Date Inspected: 11-27-2023

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			25		25
Summer					0

QRS Rating: 3

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 02-01-2024 to 02-01-2026
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Raymond Salsbury **Date:** 03-12-2024

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

NA

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

An unannounced annual visit was made to the Sugar Plum Preschool on 02-07-24 and again on 02-22-24. The program was not in operation on the day of the first visit but I was able to review the physical facilities. During the second visit I was able to review administrative records, and observe the program in operation. I met with center director Carol Jara during the follow-up visit. Carol became the on-site director of this program in the fall of 2019 and is well qualified for the position with having obtained her masters level Pre-K teaching endorsement in 2015. Michelle Albertson is the assistant teacher and has also been with the program since 2019. The program is located in the Trinity Lutheran Church in Mason City but is operated independently of the church under the oversight of the Mason City YMCA and the executive director of that facility, Tammy Hertzel. The program offers only preschool programming to children ages 3 and 4 year of age. The program offers 3 sessions with 2 sessions offered 2 days a week operated in the morning for 3 year old children, and the other session is operated 4 days a week in the afternoon for 4 year old children. The program did have a change in the days of operation with being closed on Wednesday and adding Friday to align with the public school teacher in-service training schedule. There are currently 28 children enrolled in between the three sessions served by two teachers. All aspects of the program subject to licensing standards were reviewed.

The general layout of the building and classrooms, and operation of the program remains the same as in prior visits. The program makes use of two classrooms which are located across a hallway from each other. One room is primarily arranged with activity centers for gross motor skill activities such as music and movement, and toys that require more space. The other classroom serves as the primary programming space with a group learning area and various activity centers. Both rooms have large banks of windows along the exterior walls that provide ample natural light, a view of the outdoors, and ventilation. The gross motor room has restroom facilities just off the programing space so that children do not need to leave the room and serves as the primary toilet and handwashing facilities for the program. Additional restrooms are located off the main hallways of the church if needed. Both rooms were observed to be clean with no immediate safety concerns noted due to maintenance or layout. Both rooms have multiple exits from the room and all exits were observed to be clear of obstruction. Activity centers are created through the placement of furnishings and play structures which were arranged so as not to create any blind areas. Activity centers included options such as dramatic play, science, reading, group learning, large and small manipulatives, puzzles, art and crafts, and writing. The toys and materials present were observed to be in good repair and appropriate to the ages of the children present.

The center uses the Creative Curriculum, Handwriting Without Tears, and Jolly Phonics program to develop the planned curriculum activities. Copies of the planned curriculum and daily schedule are posted on the parent notice board both for the current and coming month. The curriculum plan is different for the 2 day and 4 day classes. While both plans identify a general learning focus and specific learning concepts the plans are developed to account for the developmental levels of the classes. The identified theme for the younger children was Valentines, and for the older children the identified themes were Clothing and Friends/Feelings. These themes were reflected in the materials of the classroom such as the books in the library, craft activities, and art projects. Both teachers were actively engaged with the children presenting the planned curriculum, participating in the activities, and assisting the children as needed. The center uses a positive interaction approach to behavior management with having a well established schedule so that the children know the routines, recognition of positive behaviors, and reminders of expectations.

Good health and safety practices were observed on the day of my visit. It was noted that the center did implement a change to the daily schedule to address an issue that was identified in the prior visit where the children would use restrooms, have story time, and then have snack. This resulted in a situation where the children would wash their hands after restroom use but then sit on the floor negating that benefit before eating. The change in the schedule is that children have snack immediately following restroom use and handwashing and then have story time. Good handwashing practices were observed, and the center also makes use of hand sanitizer for other times such as after the children finished eating. The center did not have any children currently taking any medications but policies are in place should it be necessary in the future. Children with identified allergies did have response plans present in their files. The first aid kit was reviewed and found to contain the basic materials necessary to address most common first aid needs. Chemical cleaners, personal items, and other items that could pose a safety risk to children were kept in areas where they were not readily accessible to the children and the teachers waited for the children to be out of the immediate area before using chemical cleaners.

The program does not participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program but does follow the guidelines of the program with regard to the nutritional content of the snacks served. Both staff wore food service gloves when portioning out the snack. The snack on the day of my visit included crackers, and apples. The teachers did wear food service gloves when portioning snacks. While the teachers did not eat with the children supervision was provided at the tables.

The center does not have a playground located on site. Approval has been given to waive this requirement given that the center is located in a commercial area, and the program has a room which provides the children with opportunities to engage in gross motor skill development.

A review of administrative records found all required postings were present and readily visible to parents and visitors. All child files were reviewed and found to contained all required information with the exception of 1 that needed a physical. Full staff files including background checks are maintained at the YMCA main office and files with training certificates and physicals are maintained at the center. In reviewing the files at the center location both were current on all required training however Michelle had not completed the required hours of on-going training. It was noted that there was documentation in the file that she was scheduled for a training in May. It was confirmed with the YMCA main office that the Iowa SING background checks for both Carol and Michelle were current. All inspection logs and certificates were available and current with the exception of Radon testing which had recently expired in January. While the results of the prior testing were well under acceptable cutoff limits renewed testing is required.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The center works to exceed Licensing Standards and implement best practice recommendations by participating in the IQ4K program. The center is currently rated as a Level 3 program out of a possible 5 level scale.

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

109.7(2): Center directors and all staff have the required contact hours of training.
Number not in compliance: 1

109.11(7)b: Centers at ground level that use basement area as program space, or have a basement beneath program space: Testing and plan for remedy of radon is conducted.
-- Radon testing was expired and needs to be renewed.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

A full license is recommended 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.

*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.