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

Name of Center: St Joseph Childcare **Enrollment:** 50 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 25092

Street: 1430 14th St **City:** Marion Iowa **Zip** 52302 **County:** Linn

Mailing Address: 1430 14th St, Marion, IA, 52302

Director's Name: Amy Diercks **Phone Number:** 319-377-6348

On-Site Supervisor(s): Amy Diercks **E-Mail:** childcaredirector@sjcsmarion.org pbrady@sjcsmarion.org

Date(s) of Visit: 05-01-2024

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: 10-13-2023

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: Infants (0-23 mo.) 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			77	24	101
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 05-01-2024 to 05-01-2026
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons **Date:** 05-13-2024

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

Not applicable.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

St. Joseph Childcare has been in operation for many years. St. Joseph Childcare is located inside St. Joseph Catholic Elementary School and operates under a Board of Directors. The program provides a preschool program, preschool-age childcare, and school-age childcare. Current enrollment is 50.

Director of St. Joseph Childcare is Amy Diercks. Ms. Diercks has been the director since July 2023. Ms. Diercks has a BS degree in Biology/Doctor of Chiropractic, over 5 years experience working with children and continues to participate in much child development related training.

On 5/1/2024, program space was observed.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

St. Joseph Childcare is well-established in a residential neighborhood of a predominantly urban area. The program has been in operation for several years. St. Joseph Childcare offers full-time and part-time options to help meet the needs of children and families in the community. The program accepts a variety of funding.

St. Joseph's Childcare has the following website for families and the community to learn more about the program https://sjcsmarion.org/.

The mission of St. Joseph Childcare is to provide an "...educational experience within a Christian atmosphere that will contribute to spiritual, emotional, intellectual, physical, and social development..."

St. Joseph Childcare has a history of participating in quality initiatives including a local quality program and QRS.

Management of St. Joseph Childcare has remained consistent. Ms. Diercks has been employed with St. Joseph Childcare for 2 years, and specifically, been the program's director since July 2023. Ms. Diercks is knowledgeable of licensing guidelines as well as their own program's policies and procedures. Ms. Diercks continues to develop systems of organization to help ensure administrative items are completed as required and maintained in a secure manner. Noteworthy administrative supports to the childcare continue to be provided by those in the St. Joseph Elementary Catholic School office, and most specifically, Peggy Brady. As a result, the program experiences smooth daily operations. The program has access to a designated director's childcare administrative office space.

St. Joseph Childcare has retained seasoned staff as well has hired a few new staff. Two staff reported celebrating 3 years of employment with St. Joseph Childcare. Many staff have teaching degrees and/or CDAs. There is a "Meet your Teachers" display. Ms. Diercks discussed how well the staff and administration work with one another and support one another.

St. Joseph Childcare has emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. St. Joseph has successfully navigated through the 2008 historic Linn County flood, 2019 winter Polar Vortex,

8/10/2020 Derecho Storm, 2019 health (Covid-19) pandemic, 2021 food supply issues, 2022 infant formula shortages and 2023 air quality issues.

St. Joseph Childcare operates under a Board of Directors. St. Joseph Childcare has a collaborative partnership with St. Joseph Catholic School. Building and grounds are well-maintained. School custodial staff, school administration, school nurse, and school food service personnel help ensure the children's space is sanitary and hazard free each day. The school kitchen is inspected at least annually by the health department. School kitchen personnel provides food service to St. Joseph Childcare even on days of no-school, extended breaks, and so on. There is an AED on-site. The program has regular access to the school gymnasium for large gross motor activities particularly on inclement weather days.

St. Joseph Childcare 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. Newsletters have included summer care information (e.g. pool trips, on-site water days,) and curriculum events (e.g. March building of Leprechaun traps). The program has an active parent association. St. Joseph Childcare offers an on-site mobile library experience and regular book-order fundraiser for families. At times, St. Joseph Childcare and St. Joseph Catholic Elementary School participate in collaborative fund raising events. Notes of thanks and gratitude from families acknowledging staff were observed to be posted in various areas of the program space.

Furnishings are child friendly and materials are accessible to the children. Since the last review, new preschool room sinks and counters were installed. Future goals include outdoor playground fence enhancements. Curriculum occurs in a Christian environment, is play based and includes a combination of strategies (e.g. religious education, physical activity, social-emotional components, literacy, STEM offerings, teacher-inspired ideas). Summer 2024 programming will incorporate themed weeks (e.g. bike/scooter days), picnics, guest speakers (e.g. Kona Ice), off-site field trips (e.g. local swimming pools, Children's Museum), and additional on-site enrichments (e.g. crafts). Ms. Diercks discussed how the program recently applied for and received a garden grant to be able to support local farmer's markets and update the program's snack menu to include more fresh and local food items. Ms. Diercks also talked about being very proud of the program's snack menu having school person Ms. Kettman take the lead with food planning in order to increase variety of foods offered.

St. Joseph Childcare collaborates well with many community partners including local businesses, health professionals, nature center, local school districts, and CCR&R.

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. This program has policies and procedures in place for hand washing, cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting. Staff were able to verbalize and engage in these processes.

On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were nurturing and attentive to the children's needs. Children have access to an array of materials (e.g. books, imaginative play options, building materials, puzzles, sensory, crafts, outdoor loose materials including bubble machine and sidewalk chalk) that encourage innovative play. Routine transitions (e.g. clean up activities) worked smoothly into the program's welcoming and cooperative play environment. Staff were overheard providing children with many words of encouragement, providing positive redirection when needed (e.g. tickets, stickers), and engaging children in much meaningful discussion. Children responded well to staff and appeared happy truly enjoying their day.

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

109.10(15)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.
- Documentation of a monthly fire drill and monthly tornado drill were not found for all months of 2023 and 2024.

109.11(3)d: Record of monthly inspections of outdoor recreation area and equipment shall be kept.
- Documentation of a monthly outdoor playground inspection was not found for all months of 2023 and 2024.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

A circular sensory panel is missing from one of the outdoor playground climbing structures. Remedy to help prevent any possible entrapment.

The single-axis swing chains and belt seats are showing ware. Remedy or replace.

Ensure if substitutions are served to the meal or snack menu, these shall be noted on the menu posted in the area frequented by parents.

Ensure there are updated lesson plans and daily schedule posted in each area that is included in this license (e.g. preschool-age and school-age childcare rooms, 3yo preschool room and 4yo preschool room).

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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.