Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: St Matthew Preschool

Provider No.: 47708

Address: 2244 1st Ave NE, Cedar Rapids, IA, 52402

County: Linn

Director's Name: Tami Kolden

On-Site Supervisor: Heather Waddell, Assistant Director

Phone Number: 3193623021

E-Mail: tami.kolden@crxcs.org
connie.schulte@crxcs.org

HHS Visit Date: 01/06/2026

Licensing Period: 02/01/2025 to 02/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 01/01/2025

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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HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday		8:15 AM to 11:30 AM	
Tuesday		8:15 AM to 11:30 AM	
Wednesday		8:15 AM to 11:30 AM	
Thursday		8:15 AM to 11:30 AM	
Friday		8:15 AM to 11:30 AM	
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General			100		100
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

Xavier Catholic Schools owns and operates several learning centers throughout the community. Specifically, this license pertains to St. Matthew Preschool which is located inside St. Matthew Catholic Elementary School. St. Matthew Preschool is part of the Xavier Catholic School System which is accredited by the Iowa Department of Education, and which is part of the Archdiocese of Dubuque. St. Matthew Preschool is a non-profit program that has been operating since 1984. In fall 2026, this program will be celebrating their 42nd year providing preschool to the community. St. Matthew Preschool serves preschool-age children operating schoolyear only Monday through Friday 8:15am to 11:30am. Current attending enrollment reported on 1/6/2026 was 96.

Xavier Catholic Schools executive director of all early learning and childcare is Connie Schulte. Ms. Schulte has been in this role since July 2024, has much licensed childcare center director experience and continues to participate in professional development. St. Matthew Preschool's director is Tami Kolden. Ms. Kolden has been the director since August 2021. Ms. Kolden has a BA degree in elementary education with early childhood endorsement, has much experience working with children, and continues to participate in professional development. Heather Waddell has been an employee of St. Matthew's for several years prior to moving into the on-site supervisor/assistant director position in fall 2019. Ms. Waddell has much experience working with children and also continues to participate in professional development.

On 1/6/2026, program space was observed. Primary programming continues to occur in multiple classrooms designed for 4yo preschool programming and 3yo preschool programming. The building has sufficient restrooms and handwashing sinks to accommodate preschool capacity as well as areas for snack-food storage and outdoor play. During the week of this monitoring visit, areas of study throughout the preschool classrooms included snowmen, snow, virtue of Fortitude, and Catholic St. Bernadette. Activities observed included large gross motor events, center play experiences, music with

movement, and circle discussions (e.g. phonics and letter work, number recognition, book reading). Curriculum on the day of the monitoring visit allowed for a variety of play experiences that piqued child interest as well as encouraged social emotional growth, innovation and child choice. Noteworthy play experiences in the classrooms included crafting to create winter scenes, hot cocoa tea party with pompoms and bears, block building, imaginative home play, light table exploration, individual book reading, sand sifting, and dry erase writing practice. On 1/6/2026, staff were observed to be in ratio and engaged in programming with the children. Routine transitions including clean-up activities and snack rituals were observed to go well. Staff were overheard providing the children with meaningful discussion, providing positive redirection when needed and encouraging the use of social graces. Children appeared comfortable with staff and to be enjoying their day.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

St. Matthew Preschool's mission is to "...provide a Christian environment in which each child can grow spiritually, emotionally, physically, and intellectually through age-appropriate activities. We are committed, in collaboration with families, to enhance each child's character development and nurture the individual strengths and talents that allow each child to reach their potential..."

St. Matthew Preschool has the following website for families and the community to access information about the program: http://www.stmatthewcr.org/preschool/.

As of 1/6/2026, Xavier Catholic School early learning locations continue to be overseen by a board of directors. St. Matthew Preschool management team (e.g. Ms. Schulte, Ms. Kolden, Ms. Waddell) is invested in the community, having connected families with resources as well as at times being mentors for other childcare programs. The management team continues to improve their system of organization to help ensure administrative items are completed and maintained in a secure manner. The management team remains knowledgeable of licensing guidelines as well as their own program's policies and procedures. Ms. Kolden discussed how St. Matthew Preschool continues to retain many seasoned staff.

On 1/6/2026, St. Matthew Preschool was found to be maintaining required postings, maintaining parent-staff-program information centers, utilizing technological communication resources, and offering family programming activities. St. Matthew Preschool continues to have an active PTO (parent teacher organization) which holds regular meetings, sponsors fundraising events, holds annual back to school events and assists with many other family activities each year. Curriculum continues to occur 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). Curriculum also incorporates additional enrichments including off-site excursions, guest speakers, themed days, and seasonal-holiday parties.

St. Mathew Preschool continues to have and update policies and procedures that include those for safety, daily health checks, hand washing, cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting. On 1/6/2026, management acknowledged how their team of staff help ensure the children's space is sanitary and hazard free each day by following the policies and procedures. Management also talked about having support from their board and school personnel (e.g. school administration, school maintenance, school custodial team, school kitchen staff) as to daily building and grounds conditions and repairs.

Xavier Catholic School learning centers have emergency plans, policies, and procedures that are regularly reviewed and updated as needed. Specifically, St. Matthew PS has successfully navigated through historic Linn County flooding events, 2019 winter Polar Vortex, 2019 health (covid-19) pandemic, 8/10/20 Derecho Storm, 2021 food supply issues, 2022 infant formula shortages, air quality alerts (2023, 2025), and repeated technology outages (7/19/24 global technology outage, 10/10/2025 AWS outage, 10/29/2025 Microsoft outage).

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

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

None noted.

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5. Special Notes/Recommendations

Continue to collaborate with the Xavier Catholic School System including St. Matthew Elementary School regarding maintenance of the outdoor playground (e.g. adequate cushion
surface depth, chipping/rusting equipment, power washing of outdoor equipment). If areas of the outdoor playground become unsatisfactory, the childcare shall refrain from accessing those areas until remedies are made. Noted on 1/6/2026 - Repair the cracked grey heavy plastic climbing wall steps attached to the outdoor climber. At the top of the school-age sidewalk, the distance between the fence panel and swinging gate latch fence panel has increased whereas the gate latch is close to not latching properly. Remedy. There is signage attached to the outdoor play area fence with long bolts protruding into the area the children play. Please remedy to prevent a puncture hazard.

Repair areas of chipping paint (e.g. classrooms, indoor large motor room, hallways).

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The program's license remains in full status. Thank you for the visit.

Date: 01/23/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons

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**.