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

Name of Center: Apple Kids-Cedar Rapids **Enrollment:** 60 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 48222

Street: 1525 Hollywood BLVD NE **City:** Cedar Rapids Iowa **Zip** 52402 **County:** Linn

Mailing Address: 600 10TH AVE, Marion, IA, 52302

Director's Name: Hailey Stone **Phone Number:** 319-363-1539

On-Site Supervisor(s): Hailey Stone **E-Mail:** applekidsnoelridge@gmail.com

Date(s) of Visit: 02-08-2023

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: 04-13-2022

Comments :

LICENSE TYPE: X **Child Care** **Preschool (ages 3-5 meets three hours or less per day)**

Financial Type: X Profit 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	16	12	40	33	101
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 04-01-2023 to 04-01-2025
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons **Date:** 02-15-2023

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

Not applicable.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

Apple Kids has multiple programs throughout the community and has been in operation since 1995. Specifically, Apple Kids - Cedar Rapids opened on 1/2/2017. Apple Kids - Cedar Rapids is a profit program which operates year-round Monday through Friday 6:30am to 5:30pm. The program serves children age infant through school-age. Current enrollment is 60.

The Apple Kids multi-site owner is Kendran Sizemore. Ms. Sizemore has been this program's owner since it first opened. Ms. Sizemore has over 20 years experience working with children and has participated in much child development related training. The combined director/on-site supervisor of Apple Kids - Cedar Rapids is Hailey Stone. Ms. Stone has been a director with Apple Kids for over 15 years. Ms. Stone has several years experience working with children and has participated in much child development related training.

On 2/8/2023, program space was observed.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

Apple Kids offers a variety of early learning/childcare programming options to help meet the needs of children and families in the community.

The year 2023 mark the 28th year of Apple Kids providing childcare and early learning services to children and their families throughout the community. Congratulations on celebrating 28 years! Specifically, Apple Kids - Cedar Rapids will be in their 6th year of operations during 2023.

The mission of Apple Kids is "...to provide a high quality childcare center that enhances physical, social, and education growth..."

Apple Kids has the following website for families and persons in the community to learn more about their childcare programs: www.applekidsmarion.com.

Apple Kids has a history of participating in quality initiatives including local quality initiatives.

Multi-site owner Ms. Sizemore is a local entrepreneur invested in the community. Ownership and management of Apple Kids - Cedar Rapids has remained consistent since opening over 6 years ago. This includes combined director/on-site supervisor Hailey Stone. The management team is knowledgeable of licensing guidelines as well as their own program's policies and procedures. The management team is organized and has noteworthy systems of organization in place to help ensure administrative items are completed as required and maintained in a secure manner. As a result, the program experiences smooth daily operations. Ms. Stone discussed the collaboration that continues among all Apple Kids sites to share materials, curriculum, joys, challenges, ideas/planning, and floating staff when needed. Ms. Stone shared "the love for this place and kids keeps me going".

Since the last monitoring visit, the program has retained many seasoned staff as well as hired some new staff. A core group of the program's staff has been employed with Apple Kids even prior to this site opening in 2017. Staff reported celebrating 18 years, 15 years, 5 years, 4 years, 1 year and 6 weeks of employment with Apple Kids. Ms. Stone and Ms. Imhoff talked about how starting in spring 2023, Apple Kids centers will be closed one day a year for staff professional development and appreciation. Staff appreciation throughout the year also includes monetary incentive program, flexible scheduling whenever possible and acknowledgement of staff success. Ms. Stone discussed being proud of how Apple Kids has "...continued to beat every obstacle that has come our way the last few years...that we are still here...and confident with where we are..."

Apple Kids - Cedar Rapids has emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. Apple Kids sites have successfully navigated through the historic 2008 Linn County Flood, the 8/10/2020 Derecho Storm event and 2019 pandemic.

Apple Kids - Cedar Rapids continues efforts at optimal communication between the program/staff and families. The program has organized parent-staff/program information centers, offers regular program newsletters, utilizes technological communication resources, and supports family programming activities. Ms. Stone talked about the positive feedback they continue to receive from families including family retention and displays of gratitude.

Building and grounds are well-maintained. Apples Kids has a maintenance person to assist with building repairs. Since the last review, the center has underwent a refresh. Rooms received a fresh coat of paint, new flooring with carpets, re-arrangements, updated furnishings (e.g. cozy soft areas, multi-seat child stroller for outdoor buggy rides) and new child materials (e.g. puppet theater, kitchen sets, imaginative sandwich making station, infant nursery). Outdoor areas also received enhancements including some new equipment (e.g. school bus, race car, train tunnels, tic tac toe, xylophone), and garden boxes. Ms. Imhoff talked about future goals of installing an outdoor sports plex, adding additional outdoor areas of shade, resurfacing the toddler playground, and continued fence repairs/updates. The kitchen is spacious and sanitary. Ms. Stone discussed how menus are in the process of being updated. In 2021, Culligan Water System/Station was established in lieu of use of the water fountains.

Classrooms continue to be arranged in a thoughtful manner with learning at the forefront. Children's accomplishments (e.g. artwork; Very clever and unique Valentine's Day inspired projects observed throughout the classrooms - older infant's "Lovebug" milestone footprint, 2yo "love extinct" dino art, and 4yo "bee" fingerprint!) are displayed in various areas of the program space. Apple Kids - Cedar Rapids curriculum includes a combination of learning strategies incorporating teacher-inspired ideas, phonics work, math concepts, small and large gross motor, imaginative play experiences, and crafts. Curriculum also incorporates off-site field trip experiences, on-site guest speaker events, themed days, holiday/seasonal parties, parent/teacher conferences, and occasional parent night out events. Communication between children and staff is done verbally, with picture cues, and through sign language. Ms. Stone discussed how staff have done a really good job of arranging/updating their classrooms with inspiring themes while also intertwining the curriculum with self created ideas. Ms. Stone talked about how 2023 summer program planning will soon be underway.

Apple Kids - Cedar Rapids collaborates well with community agencies including the local school districts, early access persons, health professionals, and various local businesses. Ms. Stone acknowledged the strong relationship specifically with Wright Elementary School which is part of the Cedar Rapids Community School District. Ms. Stone talked about their close proximity/walking distance of the school and their center's ability to provide full and/or part-time childcare to so many of their students. Ms. Stone discussed how Apple Kids - Cedar Rapids does provide transportation and/or walking services of 4-year-old preschool children to Wright Elementary School for statewide voluntary preschool programing.

The infant room has a “no shoe” policy and supports safe sleep practices.

Staff engage each child 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. Staff encouraged children to "catch coughs" and "catch sneezes" in elbows. The program has policies and procedures in place for cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing. Cleaning duties were observed to be posted in various areas of the building.

On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were nurturing and attentive to the children's needs. Areas of study included Valentines and winter season. Activities observed were many (e.g. infant cares, group circle discussion with book reading, finger plays, musical instrument playing in the toddler room, center play experiences). Children had access to an array of materials (e.g. books, imaginative play options, building materials, crafts) that encouraged innovative play. Staff provided a companionable presence allowing children to have many choices in their play experiences. Staff were observed to communicate with the children verbally, with picture cards, and through sign language. Routine transitions (e.g. clean up activities, food service rituals) worked smoothly into the program's welcoming and cooperative play environment. Staff were overheard providing children with many words of encouragement, positive redirection when needed and engaging children in much meaningful discussion. Children responded well to staff and appeared to be truly enjoying their day.

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

None noted.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

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.