Iowa Department of Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER COMPLAINT

Name of Center: Essential Montessori **Enrollment:** 30 **License ID:** 25044

Street: 1350 Blairs Ferry Rd Ste A **City:** Hiawatha **IA** **Zip Code:** 52233 **County:** Linn

Mailing Address: 1350 Blairs Ferry Rd Ste A

Mailing City: Hiawatha **IA** **Zip Code:** 52233

Director's Name: Constance "Connie" Craft **Center Phone Number:** 319-378-3100

On-Site Supervisors: Constance "Connie" Craft **E-Mail Address:** essential-montessori@hotmail.com

Date of Complaint: 05-06-2025 **Date of Visit:** 05-07-2025

[ ] Scheduled **[X]** Unannounced **[ ]** NA

[X] Non-Compliance with Regulations Found **[ ]** Compliance with Regulations Found

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE

[X] NO CHANGES to licensing status recommended

[ ] PROVISIONAL license from **to**

[ ] SUSPENSION of License

[ ] REVOCATION of License

Complaint Details:

Did this complaint result in a serious injury? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Did this complaint result in a death to a child? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Summary of Complaint:

On 5/6/2025, a complainant reported the director used soap on a child's face and in the child's mouth as disciplinary action. The complainant is not sure how often this has occurred.

Licensing Rules Relevant to the Complaint:

109.12(2) Center shall have written policy on discipline of children which provides for positive guidance, with direction for resolving conflict and setting of limits.

Inspection Findings:

Iowa Department of Human Services

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On 5/7/2025, licensing conducted an unannounced visit to Essential Montessori. The following is based up a face-to-face interview with director Ms. Craft and observations on-site:

109.12(2) Center shall have written policy on discipline of children which provides for positive guidance, with direction for resolving conflict and setting of limits. Center does not use corporal punishment including spanking, shaking, or slapping. Punishment which is humiliating or frightening or causes pain or discomfort is not allowed. Mechanical restrains shall never be used. If part of a treatment plan for a child with a disability, staff shall receive training. Punishment or threat of punishment associated with illness, toilet training, or food or rest is not be used. No child is subject to verbal abuse, threats, derogatory remarks about child or child's family. RULE VIOLATED.

- Ms. Craft discussed a child who regularly displayed behaviors including using much profanity when present. Ms. Craft talked about repeatedly informing the parents of the behaviors and repeatedly using verbal positive redirection with the child. Ms. Craft indicated when a child has used "bathroom language" in the past, she has always been able to quickly put an end to it by offering to gather bathroom materials for the child to go clean the bathroom while getting all the "bathroom" words out. Ms. Craft indicated this particular statement with idea of cleaning the bathroom did not seem to deter this particular child from decreasing any behaviors.
- Ms. Craft discussed a day in February 2025, when the child's behaviors continued to escalate including increased profanity, some aggression and repetitive spitting noises with spit particles going everywhere. Ms. Craft reported using multiple verbal attempts that day to redirect the child but nothing was working. Ms. Craft acknowledged damping a paper towel and wiping soap on it. Ms. Craft discussed how she told the child to wipe his/her face and mouth area to clean it from all the germs. Ms. Craft said the child did, made a face and then spit some more. Ms. Craft denied that she forced the child to eat soap. Ms. Craft also denied using this strategy with other children or on more than one occasion with this particular child.
- Ms. Craft discussed how in February, the child's parents were upset making a reference to the movie "A Christmas Story" where in that movie the child's parent placed a bar of soap in the child's mouth. Ms. Craft talked about how she attempted to tell the parents exactly what occurred but they did not want to hear any explanation. Ms. Craft indicated the child hasn't been back to the program since February 2025.
- Licensing and Ms. Craft reviewed discipline rules. Ms. Craft indicated she would not use the paper towel-soap again. Ms. Craft further indicated that moving forward if a child is not able to be verbally redirected after displaying behaviors including aggression and profanity, she will contact the child's parent(s) for immediate pick-up from the program.

Special Notes and Action Required:

Based upon the above, no response to this report is requested.

*Note: If you are the Child Care Center Director and you feel something is unclear or unjustly cited, please contact your DHHS 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 DHHS Licensing Consultant to inquire

Consultant's Signature:

Amy Lyons

Date:

05-09-2025