Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: KCE Champions LLC @ West Willow Elementary School

Provider No.: 51758

Address: 6225 First AVE SW, Cedar Rapids, IA, 52405

County: Linn

Director's Name: Paul Pressler

On-Site Supervisor: Kristy Blanchett

Phone Number: 3194889028

E-Mail: paul.pressler@discoverchampions.com
ssous@discoverchampions.com

HHS Visit Date: 01/02/2026

Licensing Period: 03/01/2026 to 03/01/2028

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 10/27/2023

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

- [ ] PTO
- [X] Licensing Visit
- [ ] Drop In
- [ ] Administrative Change

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

- [X] Accrediation

Comments: Corporate Accreditation from Cognia a global leader in advancing excellence in education through accreditation

Program Duration:

- [X] Year-Round
- [ ] School Year
- [ ] Summer Only

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HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Tuesday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Wednesday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Thursday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Friday	6:30 AM to 6:00 PM		
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General			50	190	240
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

KinderCare Learning Companies, Inc. was founded in 1969 and has grown to become one of the largest providers of childcare in the United States. KinderCare Learning Companies, Inc. is currently primarily owned by Partners Group a Swiss private equity firm as well as other shareholders and investors. KCE Champions LLC is a division of KinderCare Learning Companies, Inc. and included as a core brand along with KinderCare Learning Centers and The Creme School. Specifically, this license and inspection report pertains to KCE Champions LLC @ West Willow Elementary School which commenced operations in fall of 2022. This location includes childcare for school-age and preschool-age children outside of school hours including the option to provide full days of childcare on no school days and extended school breaks including winter, spring and summer breaks.

Multi-site regional manager Setara Sous has a BA in criminology, has experience working with children and continues to participate in child development related training. Ms. Sous has also been director qualified since January 2024. Multi-site director Paul Pressler has been with Champions since fall 2023 and began to fill a multi-site director role in April 2024. Mr. Pressler has a MA degree in educational leadership, has experience working with children and continues to participate in child development related training. On-site supervisor (OSS) is Kristy Blanchett. Ms. Blanchett has been employed with Champions since fall 2022 and began to fill the OSS role in September 2023. Ms. Blanchett has experience working with children and continues to participate in child development related training.

On 1/2/2026, program space was observed. Primary programming occurs in the school cafeteria. On some days and hours of operation, the program also has access to Maker Room #2005, school gymnasium, some additional classrooms and outdoor school play areas. Sufficient restrooms including hand washing sinks are available. All foods offered to the childcare children are stored and prepared by the Cedar Rapids Community School District in the on-site school kitchen.

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On 1/2/2026, staff were observed warmly greeting children and families as they arrived for childcare. The day's events included a "Lazy Day" allowing children to bring a "stuffy" from home. Curriculum on the day of the monitoring visit allowed for a variety of experience (e.g. individual, small group discussion, large gross motor) that were observed to pique child interest as well as encourage social emotional growth, innovation, good sportsmanship, the use of social graces and child choice. On 1/2/2026, staff were observed to be in ratio and engaged in programming with the children. Routine transitions were observed to go well. Children appeared comfortable with staff and to be enjoying their morning. One child was noted to be particularly enjoying having brought her "stuffy" from home to the program to share!

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

According to the family and employee handbook, the philosophy of KCE Champions LCC is that "...learning is meant to be a natural, joyful experience. Our goal is to help your child develop socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually. Children thrive when the process of discovery is lovingly encouraged and gently reinforced..."

KCE Champions LLC @ West Willow Elementary has established the following website for families and the community to learn more about the program: https://crschools.us/students-and-families/quick-links/champions/.

As of 1/2/2026, KCE Champions LLC programs remain for profit and operate under a board of directors having several Chief Operators including ones specific to operations, finance, curriculum and branding. The local management team (e.g. regional manager Setara Sous, multi-site director Mr. Pressler, OSS Ms. Blanchett) remain consistent. Management is knowledgeable of licensing guidelines as well as their own policies and procedures. Management has reported holding regular staff meetings to review rules, policies and procedures. Ms. Blanchett discussed having a great group of attending families as well as reliable team of staff.

On 1/2/2026, KCE Champions LLC @ West Willow was found to be maintaining required posting, maintaining parent-staff-program information centers, utilizing technological communication resources, and offering family programming activities. Curriculum continues to focus on six content areas that research shows enhance children’s growth and development as well as help build the essential skills needed to be successful in preschool, school and beyond: Character Development, Community, Creative Expression, Executive Function, Inquiry-Based Learning, and Literacy. The program provides child interest areas in creative arts, literacy, math and construction, puzzles and games, and science. Daily fitness, healthy eating, and homework assistance (as needed) are part of the program’s operations. Extended school break curriculum continues to be enhanced with guest speaker events and off-site field trips. Lesson plans posted indicated winter school break 2025 included a glow stick party and disco ball dancing.

KCE Champions LLC continues to have and update as needed policies and procedures that include those for safety, daily health checks, hand washing, cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting. On 1/2/2026, Ms. Blanchett acknowledged how their team of staff continue to help ensure the children's space is sanitary and hazard free each day by following their policies and procedures. Ms. Blanchett also talked about having support from the school (e.g. school kitchen staff, school administration, school maintenance, school custodial team) as to daily building and grounds conditions and repairs. School kitchen is inspected by the local health department. There is an AED on-site.

KCE Champions LLC locations including this specific location have emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. The programs have successfully navigated through air quality alerts (2023, 2025), repeated expansion and acquisition events, 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

109.9(1)c All files contain documentation to indicate that ongoing staff training requirements are met, including current certifications in first aid/CPR and mandatory child abuse training.
- Staff file reviewed (KB) had documentation of completion of the online component of first-aid and CPR but no documentation of full certificate including the skills component.
- Staff file reviewed (KB) lacked documentation of current mandatory child abuse reporter training.

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109.11(3)a Center shall ensure that: Facility and premises are sanitary, safe, and hazard free. Sufficient lighting shall be provided. Sufficient ventilation. Sufficient heating. Sufficient cooling. Equipment placed in the program area is maintained so as not to result in injury to the children.
- On 1/2/2025, the program had access to the school gymnasium. One child verbally reported being "cold" and stating "it's always too cold to play in here". Gym thermostat was observed to have a temperature of 65 degrees.
- The program shall have a cleaner, sanitizer and disinfectant available and stored in an inaccessible but readily available manner. Each chemical shall be properly labeled with the name of the contents and manufacturer's instructions of use (e.g. ratio if applicable, dwell time).

109.11(8)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.
109.11(8)c All centers: Annual inspection prior to heating season of all fuel-burning appliances to reduce risk of carbon monoxide poisoning and shall install one carbon monoxide detector on each floor that conforms to UL Standard 2034.
- Ms. Blanchett denied this location currently has any preschool-age children attending. However, the program is licensed to serve and has served both preschool-age and school-age children. Documentation of current radon testing and an annual fuel burning appliance inspection were not found on-site.
- A UL Standard 2034 was not found on each level of the school building. If UL Standard 2034 carbon monoxide detectors are hard-wired into the building, please obtain and retain documentation of such (including where located in the building) with the program's license paperwork.

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

Continue to collaborate with the school district regarding maintenance of the outdoor playground (e.g. sufficient cushion surface depth, chipping/rusting equipment, power washing of outdoor equipment). If any area of the outdoor play space becomes unsatisfactory, the childcare shall refrain from accessing those areas until remedies are made.

Ensure written handbooks (e.g. family handbook, employee handbook) are updated to include offerings for not only school-age children but also preschool-age children.

Since the childcare uses shared space in a public school building, ensure there is a locked medication box that is fully functional with keys. All non-rescue medication shall always be locked as well as all rescue medication when the child prescribed the medication is not in attendance. When the child prescribed rescue medication is in attendance, the rescue medication shall be stored in an inaccessible but readily available manner. Also, at least one childcare cabinet shall have a fully functional lock with keys for staff to store chemicals, confidential administrative items (e.g. child files, staff files) and any potential personal items (e.g. purse).

Please note - Total capacity of this location is based upon the childcare having full access to the school cafeteria, school gymnasium, school Maker Room #2005, school outdoor play areas and sufficient number of school restrooms during all days and all hours of operation. On 1/2/2026, attendance could be served in the school cafeteria. However, there was some exercise equipment set up in the school gym which the childcare program is not allowed to use, and which impacted the program's ability to use the entire fully licensed space. Other classrooms and Maker Room #2005 were also not fully and easily available. The school cafeteria has a capacity of 70. The school gymnasium has a capacity of 167. The Maker Room #2005 has a capacity of 20. If the childcare no longer has full access to all reported space during all days and hours of operation and no alternative space in the school building is provided, total capacity for the childcare program is required to change.

A full license is issued. Thank you for the visit.

Date: 01/07/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons

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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**.