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

Name of Center: Grace Preschool **Enrollment:** 71 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 26611

Street: 3700 Cottage Grove AVE **City:** Des Moines Iowa **Zip** 50311 **County:** Polk

Mailing Address: 3700 Cottage Grove AVE, Des Moines, IA, 50311

Director's Name: Ashley Wissler and Kelly Donnelly **Phone Number:** 515-279-5942

On-Site Supervisor(s): Rachel Wilke-Shapiro and Julie Sahlin **E-Mail:** CoreenWitke@gracedesmoines.org ashleywissler@gracedesmoines.org

Date(s) of Visit: 02-07-2025

X **Licensing Visit** X **Unannounced Visit** **Off Year Visit** **Administrative Change**

LICENSING VISITS

New Application X **Re-Application** **NA**

Signed Application (470-0722) Received X **Yes** **No** **NA** **Date Signed:** 01-09-2025

FIRE INSPECTION **State** X **Local** **NA** **Is Fire Inspection Approved?** X **Yes** **No** **NA**

Date Inspected: 04-16-2024

Comments : Des Moines Fire Marshal. For licensing, inspections are due at least every three years. Des Moines typically does annual inspections.

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.) 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	0	12	52	15	79
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 03-01-2025 to 03-01-2027
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Nate Knepper **Date:** 02-10-2025

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

N/A.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

A licensing visit was conducted on 2/7/25. The director, Ashley Wissler, was present throughout the visit.

All areas of the program were observed. These areas observed consisted of classroom observations and activities, ratios, nutritional practices, health and safety practices, playground observation, field trip and transportation practices, and administrative review.

Grace Preschool is located primarily in a lower level wing of the Grace United Methodist Church. There are five classrooms. The center serves children two years in age to roughly eight years in age (there is a school-age summer school component) using the Creative Learning Curriculum. The center is open year-round. Children typically can attend the center up until they are starting third grade. Some children attend full-day programming and some children attend part-day programming. Universal Preschool is also incorporated at the center.

The center is overseen by a church Board. The director of this center as of 5/2022 is Ashley Wissler. Ashley was previously an on-site supervisor. Ashley also has a BA degree in Early Childhood Education. Kelly Donnelly is the assistant director. Kelly was previously the director. There are two on-site supervisors - Rachel Wilke-Shapiro and Julie Sahlin. All individuals meet the qualifications for their positions.

During the visit, children were observed in a variety of activities which included eating lunch and washing their hands after using the restroom. Staff were supervising while children were using the restroom and ensured hand washing. Children stated they also washed their hands before sitting down for lunch. Children gave specific information on where they relocate to for monthly fire and tornado drills. Staff were observed sitting with children at the child-size tables and chairs during lunch.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The center participates in QPPS. In addition, all staff are also involved with NAEYC and other local, state, and/or national organizations (AEA, T.E.A.C.H. Program, Wages Program, etc.).

The center is currently working on IQ4K which is a voluntary program based on best practice.

Staff are required to get more than the DHS minimum requirements for annual professional training.

There is a parent advisory committee. Parents are strongly encouraged to participate in center events/activities. Communication with parents is stressed in the form of weekly and monthly newsletters specific to each classroom as well as center-wide newsletters. The center has a website as well as a Facebook page. The center also uses Pro-Care to communicate with families. Finally, two parent-teacher conferences are held each year.

Quarterly staff meetings are held. Staff also communicate through the app, Connect Team.

There is an additional cleaning service crew that clean the center classrooms five days a week.

There is a portfolio and picture display outside of each classroom detailing recent activities.

Staff pictures and bios are posted outside classrooms.

The center participates in the food program (CACFP) and has a full-time cook.

The center serves a diverse population.

The center has access to an indoor gym area when weather does not permit outdoor play.

The center as well as families/children have access to a mental health office as well as a medical clinic that is located within the church.

There are a lot of tenured staff who work at this program. The director acknowledges good work through verbal praise, gift cards, etc. Staff may also be eligible for sick leave, raises, etc. The director has her staff do extra incentive/training pieces such as taking the "Strength Finder Quiz" and things of that nature.

Good child-staff interactions were again observed. Staff stated they try to work together as a team and bounce ideas off of each other.

The center received 100% on their last immunization audit from earlier in 2025.

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

109.4(3)b: Postings are required for: Mandatory reporter requirements. Notice of availability of handbook. Program activities. These shall be posted in area frequented by parents or public.
The Mandatory Reporter posting was not posted on the day of the visit and could not be located.

109.9(1)d: All files contain a pre-employment physical exam report completed within six months prior to hire and at least every three years. Physical exams shall be documented on form 470-5152, Child Care Provider Physical Examination Report.
Number not in compliance: 1 staff member was past due for a physical.

109.9(2)c: All files contain information regarding the specific health and medical needs of a child including information regarding any prescribed treatment.
For school-age programs in the child's school, all files include a statement signed by the parent that the immunization information is available in the school file.
Number not in compliance: 2 children were past due for updated annual physicals.

109.11(3)a: Center shall ensure that: Facility and premises are sanitary, safe, and hazard free. Adequate indoor and outdoor space is provided. The outdoor area shall include safe play equipment and area of shade.
There was a wooden bench outside on the playground that needs to have another nut or cap on the bolts so that no more than two threads are showing.

109.11(7)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.
The boiler inspection was past due per the invoice observed.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Radon testing was last completed 1/27/24 - 1/29/24. All classrooms came back with radon levels below the 4.0 cutoff. Because levels were below 4.0, the center can move to testing for radon at least every five years now. So long as radon levels remain below 4.0, they can remain on a five year plan. If at the next testing, levels in any classroom come back 4.0 or higher, the center will have to have a mitigation plan, retest, and at least temporarily move back to testing every two years.

The HVAC system was last inspected 12/8/23 so it is past due.

Most of the field trips are within walking distance and/or they promote parents transporting their own children. The center does have a bus that is used sparingly at other times for field trips.

IQ4K and I-Power were discussed at the visit. Staff will need to be consistently uploading their training certificates/hours.

A Mandatory Reporter posting was emailed to the center after the visit concluded.

It is again recommended that outdoor mats be purchased to place under the swings and at the bottom of slides. This will better preserve the wood chip surfacing requirements.

This consultant's most current contact posting was emailed to the center after the visit concluded.

It is recommended child paperwork be condensed. This consultant showed the director the form in the licensing regulations handbook/Comm that they could use. Then, the center could add a transportation and photo permission section to this form.

A new, full, two-year license is recommended.

*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.