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

Name of Center: Sugar Plum Preschool **Enrollment:** 25 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 21917

Street: 213 N Pennsylvania AVE **City:** Mason City Iowa **Zip** 50401 **County:** Cerro Gordo

Mailing Address: 213 N Pennsylvania AVE, Mason City, IA, 50401

Director's Name: Carol Jara (on-site) Tammy Hertzel (exec) **Phone Number:** 641-424-9316

On-Site Supervisor(s): **E-Mail:** sugarplum.preschool@hotmail.com

Date(s) of Visit: 01-16-2025

Licensing Visit X **Unannounced Visit** X **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: 11-27-2023

Comments :

LICENSE TYPE: **Child Care** X **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.) 2 Years X Preschool-Age School-Age

Get-Well Evening Care Special Needs

SCHEDULE: Year-round X School-Year Summer Only

HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General			25		25
Summer					0

QRS Rating: 3

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 02-01-2024 to 02-01-2026
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Raymond Salsbury **Date:** 02-05-2025

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

NA

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

An unannounced annual visit was made to the Sugar Plum Preschool on 01-16-25 where I met with center director Carol Jara. Carol became the on-site director of this program in the fall of 2019 and is well qualified for the position with having obtained her masters level Pre-K teaching endorsement in 2015. Michelle Albertson is the assistant teacher and has also been with the program since 2019. The program is located in the Trinity Lutheran Church in Mason City but is operated independently of the church under the oversight of the Mason City YMCA and the executive director of that facility, Tammy Hertzel. The program offers only preschool programming to children ages 3 and 4 year of age. The program offers 3 sessions with 2 sessions offered 2 days a week operated in the morning for 3 year old children, and the other session is operated 4 days a week in the afternoon for 4 year old children. There are currently 25 children enrolled in the program between the three sessions served by two teachers, and a volunteer foster grandparent. All aspects of the program subject to licensing standards were reviewed.

The general layout of the building and classrooms, and operation of the program remains the same as in prior visits. The program makes use of two classrooms which are located across a hallway from each other. One room is primarily arranged with activity centers for gross motor skill activities such as music and movement, and toys that require more space. The other classroom serves as the primary programming space with a group learning area and various activity centers. Both rooms have large banks of windows along the exterior walls that provide ample natural light, a view of the outdoors, and ventilation. The gross motor room has restroom facilities just off the programing space so that children do not need to leave the room and serves as the primary toilet and handwashing facilities for the program. Additional restrooms are located off the main hallways of the church if needed. Both rooms were observed to be clean with no immediate safety concerns noted due to maintenance or layout. Both rooms have multiple exits from the room and all exits were observed to be clear of obstruction. Activity centers are created through the placement of furnishings and play structures which were arranged so as not to create any blind areas. Activity centers included options such as dramatic play, science, reading, group learning, large and small manipulatives, puzzles, art and crafts, and writing. The toys and materials present were observed to be in good repair and appropriate to the ages of the children present. The center uses the Creative Curriculum, Handwriting Without Tears, and Jolly Phonics program to develop the planned curriculum activities. Copies of the planned curriculum and daily schedule are posted on the parent notice board both for the current and coming month. The curriculum plan is different for the 2 day and 4 day classes. While both plans identify a general learning focus and specific learning concepts the plans are developed to account for the developmental levels of the classes.

Good interactions and engagement were observed on the day of the visit with each of the teachers present. The class was engaged in self-directed large motor center play, and then moved to a teacher lead music and movement activity. The teachers did play with the children talking to them about their play and asking questions to help reinforce learning concepts such as numbers and colors as well as helping the children consider and develop narratives about their play. When engaging in the music and movement activity the teachers did sing and dance with the children. The teachers did use a behavior management approach that was more reactive to child behavior with the use of redirection which was effective in that there were no behavioral concerns noted. There was some limited use of more proactive approaches such as routines of having the children sit on a bench in an assigned spot after restroom use and a transition activity of singing a song while waiting for peers. The teachers do use calm, positive, and encouraging tones when speaking to the children.

Good health and safety practices were observed on the day of my visit. Good handwashing practices were observed with the teachers ensuring the children wash their hands following restroom use and prior to snack service. The center also makes use of hand sanitizer for other times such as after the children finished eating. Due to the limited hours of operation medications are not routinely administered but policies are in place should it be necessary in the future. Children with identified allergies did have response plans present in their files. The first aid kit was reviewed and found to contain the basic materials necessary to address most common first aid needs. Chemical cleaners, personal items, and other items that could pose a safety risk to children were kept in areas where they were not readily accessible to the children. The teachers waited for the children to be out of the immediate area before using chemical cleaners.

The program does not participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program but does follow the guidelines of the program with regard to the nutritional content of the snacks served. One issue that was observed however is that while the snack served on the day of the visit did have both a grain cracker, and 100% juice option available the juice option was not provided to children unless they specifically requested it. When meals and snacks are pre-portioned /served by staff then a full serving of each component must be provided. If served family style where children serve themselves then the children can choose to take as much or little of any component they want provided they have access to each. Both staff wore food service gloves when portioning out the snack. While the teachers did not eat with the children supervision was provided at the tables. A copy of the menu of planned/served snacks is maintained. Good food storage practices were observed for food items maintained at the center.

The center does not have a playground located on site. Approval has been given to waive this requirement given that the center is located in a commercial area, and the program has a room which provides the children with opportunities to engage in gross motor skill development.

A review of administrative records found all required postings were present and readily visible to parents and visitors. All child files were reviewed and found to contained all required information with the exception of 1 that needed a physical, and another that had a physical dated from October of 2023 which would have been valid at the time of enrollment but an updated physical should have been requested due to the fact that it was due to expire soon after enrollment. Full staff files including background checks are maintained at the YMCA main office and files with training certificates and physicals are maintained at the center. In reviewing the files at the center location both were current on all required training. Confirmation was previously provided by the YMCA central office that both had current Iowa SING, and FBI fingerprint background checks. All inspection logs and certificates were available and current.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The center works to exceed Licensing Standards and implement best practice recommendations by participating in the IQ4K program. The center is currently rated as a Level 3 program out of a possible 5 level scale.

The center is also participating in the Foster Grandparent program which provides a volunteer that can assist with supervision, engagement, and other support to the teachers, and children.

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

109.10(1)a: Preschool (for children five years and younger not enrolled in school): Physical exam report submitted within 30 days of admission, was obtained no more than 12 months prior to admission, is signed by a licensed MD, DO, PA, Chiropractor or ARNP, and contains health history; present health status including allergies, medications, and acute/chronic conditions; and recommendations for continued care if necessary.
-- Number not in compliance: 2

109.15(1): Center shall serve each child a full, nutritionally balanced meal as defined by CACFP guidelines.Staff shall provide supervision at table during snacks and meals.Children at center two hours or longer shall be offered food of not less than two hours and no more than three hours apart unless child is asleep.
-- While the snack served on the day of the visit did have both a grain cracker, and 100% juice option available the juice option was not provided to children unless they specifically requested it. When meals and snacks are pre-portioned /served by staff then a full serving of each component must be provided.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

A full license will remain in effect at this time. Please provide a written response to the licensing consultant identifying a plan of action to correct and maintain those aspects cited as not meeting licensing standards and identifying an anticipated date of compliance. At least one visit will be made to the center during the next year.

*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.