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

Name of Center: KCE Champions LLC @ West Willow Elementary School **Enrollment:** 65 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 51758

Street: 6225 First AVE SW **City:** Cedar Rapids Iowa **Zip** 52405 **County:** Linn

Mailing Address: PO Box 583, Solon, IA, 52333

Director's Name: Paul Pressler **Phone Number:** 319-488-9028

On-Site Supervisor(s): Kristy Blanchett **E-Mail:** paul.pressler@discoverchampions.com

Date(s) of Visit: 01-02-2025

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

LICENSING VISITS

New Application **Re-Application** X **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: 10-27-2023

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: Infants (0-23 mo.) 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			50	190	240
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 03-01-2024 to 03-01-2026
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons **Date:** 01-03-2025

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

Not applicable.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

In 2022, KCE Champions LLC opened several licensed childcare programs in Linn County. Specifically, KCE Champions LLC @ West Willow Elementary School commenced operations on 6/6/2022. KCE Champions LLC @ West Willow Elementary School is located inside West Willow Elementary School which is part of the Cedar Rapids Community School District. The program primarily operates Monday through Friday before and after school hours 6:30am to 6:00pm. KCE Champions does have the ability to extend hours on scheduled early release days, emergency late-start days, and emergency early-out days. During the summer, full days of emergency closing (example snow day), and some breaks (holiday and spring), this site has the ability to operate full days and/or combine for full days of care at another KCE Champions LLC location. Current enrollment is 65.

Multi-site regional manager Setara Sous has a BA in criminology, has 6 years experience working within this childcare corporation, participates in child development related training and 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, over 10 years experience working with children and continues to participate in much 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 1/2/2025, program space was observed.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

KCE Champions LLC @ West Willow Elementary is located inside an elementary school in a predominantly urban neighborhood. The profit program provides a variety of early learning and childcare opportunities as well as accepts many different of funding sources to help meet the needs of children and families throughout the community.

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/.

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 LCC is a division of KinderCare Education. The history of how KCE Champions LLC came to fruition and evolved to present day (including 1969 KinderCare Learning Centers founded, 1998 corporate headquarters moved from Montgomery Alabama to present-day Portland Oregon, 2003 KCE Champions LLC joins KinderCare Education, 2013 KinderCare launches its Early Foundations proprietary curriculum) is impressive. KinderCare Education serves more than 186,000 children in 40 states, and Champions specifically serves more than 40,000 of those children in 21 states and Washington, D.C. Champions partners with principals, teachers, and parents to create more than 600 before- and after-school and year-round learning environments.

In 2021, KinderCare Education earned a fifth Gallup Exceptional Workplace Award - one of only four companies worldwide to receive this award five years in a row. Champions has made a continuous commitment to earn and re-earn Corporate Accreditation from Cognia a global leader in advancing excellence in education through accreditation.

Management (e.g. regional manager Setara Sous, multi-site director Mr. Pressler, OSS Ms. Blanchett) is consistent. Management has systems of organization in place to help ensure administrative items are completed and maintained as required. 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 acknowledged the program's growth and immense relationship building that has occurred since fall 2023, having staff who have worked hard to bond with and support enrolled families.

KCE Champions LLC has established and is working to maintain optimal communication between the program/staff and families. The program has a parent-staff/program information center, utilizes technological communication resources, and supports family programming activities. Prior to each school-year commencing, KCE Champions LLC sponsors a "Champions Family Night" at a local park with food and various activities including face painting to welcome new and returning families to the upcoming school-year. Summer camp enrollment begins in early January each year. Ms. Blanchett talked about the work she did to create a 2025 Champions summer camp enrollment posting.

KCE Champions LCC school-age curriculum focuses on six content areas that research shows enhance school-age children’s growth and development as well as help build the essential skills needed to be successful in elementary 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. There are additional opportunities offered for enrichment clubs and Junior Counselor leadership roles for older school-age students. Summer/extended breaks curriculum is also enhanced with guest speaker events and off-site field trips. During the 2024 winter school-break, Ms. Blanchett discussed how this location offered many fun experiences including an opportunity to wear an "ugly" sweater, a day in pajamas with cookie decorating, big reptile day, a glow party and an on-site professional face painting event.

KCE Champions collaborates well with many community partners including the Cedar Rapids Community School District, local businesses, CCR&R, and health professionals. School custodial staff, school administration, school nurse, and school food service personnel help ensure the children's space is sanitary and hazard free each day. The school food service personnel prepare and provide all food items for the childcare program. The school kitchen is inspected at least annually by the health department. There is an AED onsite.

Each KCE Champions LLC location has emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. The program has successfully navigated through 2022 food supply and infant formula shortages, 2023 air quality alerts and 7/19/24 global technology outage.

Each child is engaged 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. The program has policies and procedures in place for hand washing, cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting.

On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were nurturing and attentive to the children. Staff were observed warmly greeting children and families upon arrival. Activities observed included full-day spring break programming with self-selected play experiences (e.g. building materials, crafting, board games, book reading, imaginative play items). Routine transitions (e.g. clean-up, restroom breaks, face-to-name checks) worked smoothly into the day's programming. Staff were actively engaged with the children, provided positive redirection when needed and encouraged the use of social graces. Children appeared comfortable with staff and to be enjoying their day.

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

None noted.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Please ensure page 2 of required form 470-5152 Child Care Provider Physical Examination Report is placed into staff file reviewed (CG).

It is beneficial to note, Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) and the nurse consultant are excellent resources to

access training opportunities and support in the area.

The program's license remains in full status. 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.