Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: St Mark Early Childhood

Provider No.: 52980

Address: 3355 Kennedy Circle Suite #1, Dubuque, IA, 52002

County: Dubuque

Director's Name: Danielle Willis

On-Site Supervisor:

Phone Number: 5635527240

E-Mail: dwillis@stmarkyouthenrichment.org

HHS Visit Date: 07/07/2026

Licensing Period: 09/18/2025 to 08/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 08/22/2025

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

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

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

- [ ] Accrediation

Program Duration:

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

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HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday	7:00 AM to 5:30 PM		
Tuesday	7:00 AM to 5:30 PM		
Wednesday	7:00 AM to 5:30 PM		
Thursday	7:00 AM to 5:30 PM		
Friday	7:00 AM to 5:30 PM		
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

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

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	15	18	19		52
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

An unannounced off year visit was completed at this center on 7/7/26. Present for the licensing visit was the approved center director, Danielle Willis, Ashley Hinzman, assistant director, and other staff. Danielle is qualified with 20 plus years of experience and training in child care and an Associate's degree in a non child related field. Danielle states she also has the Early Childhood Outdoor Learning Certificate from NC State University. This center is not for profit and is managed by a board of directors. The center serves infants through preschool age children. The center director states the center uses the Growing Up Wild and Conscious Discipline Curriculums with a focus on nature and social-emotional learning. The center reports enrollment of 17 children at the time of the visit.

The center includes the following licensed rooms: Dew drop den room (six weeks through 23 months), mossy hollow room (18 months through three years), and willow grove room (three through five years). Program rooms include restroom areas adjacent to the rooms with hand washing sinks and toilets as well as a hand washing sink and a food preparation sink within the program room. The dew drop den and mossy hollow rooms also include a diaper station within the program room. All program space was observed.

The center serves morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack. The center does not participate in the CACFP. The center prepares food on site in the center's very clean and highly organized kitchen area currently by the assistant director.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

The center is well managed, and the staff appear to work well together. The building was remodeled to meet the needs of an early childhood center specifically. The center is clean and is being well maintained. The rooms continue to be well

furnished. Materials are organized and are accessible to the children. Program rooms are spacious and colorfully decorated. The center administration worked closely with their CCRR and CCNC consultants throughout the process of designing and opening the center as recommended. The center director reports that the board of directors is highly supportive of the center. The staff were again observed to be highly engaged with the children in program activities. The center director reports that the center has monthly staff meetings. Child and staff files as well as other required documentation for licensing were again found to be highly organized.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

109.10(1): Medications.
1. Medication present without current parent authorization form completed.

4. Any corrective action plans, provisional license, and safety plans-steps to get into compliance

N/A

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

Targeted Assessment: Behavior Management
I discussed with (director) their oversight of behavior management related to helping childcare staff: 1) Understand expectations, 2) managing frustrations, 3) monitor performance. The center director provided the following responses:
1) We have clear and extensive policies laid out in our handbook that are communicated with our staff at orientation. We utilize the Conscious Discipline framework as our Social Emotional tool for both staff and children. This framework particularly focuses on an "adult first" mindset which says "an unregulated adult can not regulate an unregulated child." We teach our staff that we have to regulate ourselves before we can step in and help our kiddos. All of our full time staff watch approximately 8 hours of Conscious Discipline videos to lay the foundation of SEL work. These hours are above and beyond their required training hours as Conscious Discipline is not a training program listed in Ipower. The director and assistant director work closely with staff and model expected responses to behavior when needed as well.
2) During onboarding we talk about "triggers" so that staff can recognize when they are getting frustrated. We coach them to Pause and Take a Deep Breath before responding to help regulate themselves. We also encourage staff to let us know when they need help. We tell them that is what we are here for and that we would much rather they ask for help than become frustrated with a situation or child. We are there to allow staff to take a breathing break, coach next steps, support other children in the room for them to work with the escalated child, model responses, or any of the above as needed.
3) We monitor being in the classrooms periodically throughout the day. We also do a lot of coaching and modeling. We check in with staff daily to debrief and troubleshoot issues as they arise. We also have monthly staff meetings where we can check in with everyone at the same time and address any needs that have come up.

The center is again reminded of the rules regarding combining different age groupings of children and what is allowed and when. Two year old children may not be combined with four year old children and three year old children may not be combined with six year old children unless under the very specific rule 109.8(2)h for the very beginning and/or end of the day with only the number of children and staff present at the center as defined by the rule. The center will need to ensure compliance.

1. Ensure standing diaper changes procedures are sanitary. This was reviewed in detail with the director and assistant.
2. Relocate/secure fan that is on shelf in the mossy hollow room.
3. Improve storage of food service items in cabinet in the willow grove room so that these items are entirely separate from other miscellaneous items.

The center will continue with a full license. Please correct the item(s) cited and address the concerns noted above in this section of the report so that corrections are obvious and ensure that items remain in compliance. This report does not require a written response. Thank you.

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Date: 07/15/2026

HHS Licensing Consultant: Heidi Hungate

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**.