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

Name of Center: LaSalle Catholic Early Learning Center **Enrollment:** 82 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 24646

Street: 60 Edgewood RD NW **City:** Cedar Rapids Iowa **Zip** 52405 **County:** Linn

Mailing Address: 60 Edgewood RD NW , Cedar Rapids, IA, 52405

Director's Name: Tarra Stangl **Phone Number:** 319-396-7818

On-Site Supervisor(s): Tarra Stangl **E-Mail:** tarra.stangl@crxcs.org
connie.schulte@crxcs.org

Date(s) of Visit: 06-24-2025

X **Licensing Visit** X **Unannounced Visit** **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: 02-08-2025

Comments :

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		12	50	50	112
Summer					0

QRS Rating: 1

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 04-01-2025 to 04-01-2027
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons **Date:** 08-01-2025

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

Not applicable.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

Xavier Catholic Schools owns and operates several learning centers throughout our community. Specifically, this license pertains to the LaSalle Catholic Early Learning Center (LCELC) which commenced operations in October 2015. LCELC is located inside LaSalle Catholic Elementary School. The program operates year-round Monday through Friday from 6:30am to 6:00pm. The program serves children age infant through school-age. Enrollment as of this report is 82.

Since the last monitoring visit, Xavier Catholic Schools Learning Centers established a multi-site executive director position to oversee all early learning. The multi-site executive early learning director is Connie Schulte who began in the position in July 2024. Ms. Schulte has much licensed childcare center director experience and continues to participate in child development related training. In August 2024, LCELC additionally obtained a new combined director/on-site supervisor (OSS) named Tarra Stangl. Ms. Stangl has prior experience working with children and continues to participate in child development related training.

On 6/24/2025, program space was observed.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

LCELC is a well-established program offering many different early learning and childcare opportunities to help meet the needs of families and children throughout the community. During 2025, LCELC will be celebrating 10 years of providing licensed early learning programming. Congratulations!

The mission of LCELC is "...to provide all students with a Christ-centered education that is future oriented, grounded in educational excellence, and fosters a sense of community true to the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church".

LCELC has the following website for families: https://lasallecatholiccr.org/elc.

LCELC is part of the Xavier Catholic School System and accredited by the Iowa Department of Education. Xavier Catholic Schools are part of the Archdiocese of Dubuque. The Archdiocese of Dubuque covers all of Eastern Iowa including high schools in Waterloo, Cedar Rapids, Dubuque, Gilbertville, Marquette, Mason City and Dyersville. LCELC has a history of participating in local and state quality initiatives. In April 2015, the program also achieved the Bronze Healthier US School Challenge Smarter Lunchroom Award. In August 2016, LCELC received a Certificate of Merit for "excellent behavior on the school bus" during child transport. LCELC has a current IQ4K 1 Star. Ms. Stangl discussed future quality goals of continued advancement within IQ4K and applying for CACFP.

Since the last review, Xavier Catholic Schools established a new multi-site executive director of early learning position which was filled by Connie Schulte in July 2024. During 2025, Ms. Schulte will be celebrating her first full year in this position. Specifically in August 2024 LCELC obtained a new site-specific combined director/OSS Tarra Stangl who brings much experience including a childcare resource educator and registered child home philosophy to the program. The program's new management team (e.g. Ms. Schulte, Ms. Stangl) is organized and has noteworthy systems of organization in

place to help ensure administrative items are completed as required and maintained in a secure manner. The management team is knowledgeable of licensing guidelines as well as their own program's policies and procedures. As a result, the program experiences smooth daily operations.

Over the last year, LCELC has retained many seasoned staff as well as hired a few new ones. Ms. Stangl talked about having some staff or part-time teachers on their team with backgrounds in special education. Ms. Stangl also noted how some staff have a CDA and/or are working towards a CDA. The program has 4 staff annual professional growth days built into the calendar, utilizes Teach and Wages programs, celebrates staff achievements and encourages staff professional goals.

Xavier Catholic Schools Early Learning Centers have emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. Their programs have successfully navigated through the 2008 historic Linn County flood, 2019 winter Polar Vortex, 2019 health (covid-19) pandemic, 8/10/20 Derecho Storm, 2021 food supply issues, 2022 infant formula shortages, air quality alerts (2023, 2025) and 7/19/24 global technology outage.

LCELC is located inside LaSalle Elementary School and adjacent the St. Jude Catholic Church. The partnership among these buildings is quite impressive including hosting community-wide celebrations and fundraising efforts! In August 2025, the 50th Annual St. Jude Sweet Corn Festival (https://judes5.wixsite.com/judesweetcornfest) will take place featuring live entertainment, carnival rides, corn husking, a country store and of course delicious, sweet corn. It's an event that is highly talked about and attended by those throughout the Midwest! Ms. Stangl discussed the efforts LCELC does with summer curriculum planning and program safety before, during and after the annual festival.

LCELC functions under the jurisdiction of the Xavier Catholic Schools Board consisting of elected parish members, school principals, and church pastors. LCELC building and grounds are well-maintained. Furnishings and materials continue to be updated and/or replaced as needed. School administrators, school custodial staff, school board and school kitchen personnel help ensure the program is sanitary and hazard free each day. The school kitchen is inspected at least annually by the health department. There is an AED on-site. LCELC is regularly invited to school sponsored assemblies and special school programming events including on-site guest speaker events (e.g. Veteran's Day Prayer Service). Ms. Stangl discussed future goals of the program including updates to the younger outdoor play area by the end of summer 2025 and increasing the program's use of technology including a Childcare Management System (CCMS). Ms. Stangl also acknowledged applying for grant opportunities to help improver operations.

Since the last review, an organizational system for LCELC's books has been established. Curriculum occurs in a Christian environment with religious education and includes a combination of strategies based upon Iowa Early Learning Strategies (e.g. physical activity, social-emotional components, Jolly Phonics, Handwriting Without Tears). Curriculum also includes guest speaker events, off-site field trips, annual fall open house, parent/teacher conferences, holiday celebrations, outdoor activities, community service projects, and teacher-inspired ideas. Most noteworthy is LCELC's enrichment learning experiences in year-round indoor hydro gardening! Summer programming 2025 includes a variety of field trips (e.g. Kernels game, Wicki-Up-Hill, local creamery, May City bowling, Nature Center, mini golf course, local parks) and on-site themed days (e.g. bike riding, water activities, science experiments).

LCELC has an active parent association. The program continues efforts towards optimal communication between the program/staff and families. The program has organized parent-staff/program information centers, offers regular program newsletters, utilizes technological communication resources, and supports family programming activities. Family programming activities have historically included collaborative off-site field trip experiences, a “Back to School Night”, end of the year preschool celebration, and seasonal/holiday celebrations. Ms. Strangl discussed a new parent questionnaire that was offered in fall 2024 as there is a strong desire to increase relationships with families.

LCELC collaborates well with community agencies, CCR&R, health professionals, other school districts and a variety of local businesses.

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, diapering, cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting.

On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were quite nurturing and attentive to the children’s needs. Children have access to an array of materials (e.g. building supplies, crafts, imaginative play experiences, puzzles, games, books). Activities offered were many and included free choice play and outdoor large gross motor activities. Most noteworthy was a group of school-agers engaged in self-created, outdoor literacy inspired (e.g. Harry Potter) play with nature-based items (e.g sticks). Routine daily transitions (e.g. clean-up events, restroom break, lunch rituals) worked smoothly into the program's welcoming and cooperative play environment. Peaceful music was found to be gently playing while younger children enjoyed a period of quiet rest. Throughout the center staff were overheard engaging children in meaningful discussion, utilizing positive redirection when needed and encouraging the use of social graces. Children responded well to staff and appeared to be truly enjoying their day.

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

None noted.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Since the 2024 inspection, LCELC obtained new management. Ms. Strangl shall be greatly commended for her attention to and organization of administrative items (e.g. child files, employee files with ipower updating, annual inspections, monthly inspections, monthly drills, written policies and procedures updated, posted daily room schedules, current posted lesson plans). Ms. Stangl's use of Google Drive to organize LCELC operations is detailed and quite impressive! Documentation indicates that over the last year, several new staff were hired and that a process for staff onboarding and orientation has not only been established but is being utilized. Ms. Strangl also assisted in the development of individualized staff training plans to help meet the needs of the LCELC and to help staff succeed in their own professional goals. Ms. Strangl continues to have goals for herself and the program including outdoor playground enhancements.

Due to the outdoor playground updates and enhancements that are happening by end of 2025, licensing is allowing some leeway in the conditions. However, please continue to collaborate with the school regarding maintenance of the outdoor playgrounds (e.g. adequate cushion surface depth, chipping/rusting equipment, power washing of outdoor equipment). If areas of the outdoor playgrounds become unsatisfactory, the licensed programs shall refrain from accessing those areas until remedies are made.

Please consider adding a door to the male-child hallway restroom to help increase sanitary secure storage in the back area.

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.

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A full license is issued. 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.