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

Name of Center: Good Shepherd Preschool **Enrollment:** 35 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 18088

Street: 1105 Washington St **City:** Eldora Iowa **Zip** 50627 **County:** Hardin

Mailing Address: 1105 Washington St, Eldora, IA, 50627

Director's Name: Karen Ritter **Phone Number:** 641-858-5928

On-Site Supervisor(s): **E-Mail:** gspeldora@gmail.com

Date(s) of Visit: 02-19-2025, 03-04-2025

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

LICENSING VISITS

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

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

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

Date Inspected: 02-18-2025

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			24		24
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: Raymond Salsbury **Date:** 03-05-2025

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

NA

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

An announced annual visit was made to the Good Shepherd Preschool program on 02-19-25 and again on 03-04-25 as the children were not present at the time of the first visit. I met with the center director, Karen Ritter, on each visit with reviewing the physical facilities and administrative records on the day of the first visit. Karen has been the director of the program since 1994 and is well qualified for the position with a Bachelor degree and Early Childhood Specialty Endorsement. Karen has two assistants, Christine Balvanz, and Elaine Manship. The program is located in a single classroom in the St. Paul Lutheran Church in Eldora. The program is operated as a non-profit preschool overseen by a board of directors. The program provides pre-school programming only in three sessions with 2 morning 3 year old classes that meet two days a week, and an afternoon 4 year old class that meets four days a week. There are currently 35 children enrolled between the three sessions. All aspects of the program subject to licensing standards were reviewed during the visit.

The layout and programming remain the same as in prior years. The classroom is located on a lower level of the church. There are several entrances to the room that lead to other spaces in the building and one providing direct secondary egress to the outdoors and playground. The exterior entrances are all security controlled requiring either an entry code/key fob, or someone in the building providing access. All exit doors opened easily and freely and were clear of obstruction. There are two bathroom spaces located off the classroom space so that children do not need to leave the room. Sinks are located in the classroom space outside the restrooms to allow for supervision of child handwashing. Windows are located along the upper level of the exterior wall and provide natural light, a limited view, and ventilation. The classroom and building were observed to be clean with no issues noted due to maintenance. The room is divided into activity centers through the use of low shelves, play structures, and furniture. The furnishing are arranged so that they do not create blind areas though there is one area between some taller shelving units that has reduced visibility that requires the teachers to be aware of how they position themselves to ensure supervision. Each center was well stocked with age appropriate materials that were in good condition and readily accessible to the children. A copy of the daily schedule and planned curriculum were posted.

The planned curriculum does change each week and identifies a general learning theme, and specific learning concepts for each week. The materials in the room are changed to support the theme with an example of the theme during the first visit being "Health & Body" and the center had activity options such as dramatic play exercise equipment. During the second visit the curriculum had a different theme and that equipment had been removed. The center does have a strong focus on curriculum implementation and helping the children build school readiness skills. This was reflected in the interactions where the teaches took every opportunity to help the children learn and review various concepts. As examples, during the 2nd visit when the children were present Karen greeted each child and had them find their name tag to put on the board to show they were present. In doing so she would review the phonics sound of the first letter of their name. Later when engaging in center play there was one center where the children signed up for the center by writing their name with Karen assisting in how to spell their name, and draw the letters. The teachers also engaged in presenting the planned curriculum with large and small group teacher lead activities. The center makes good use of proactive behavior management techniques such as having routines, reviewing expected behaviors, and recognizing positive behaviors. This approach was very effective in that there were no behavioral concerns observed during the visit. Both teachers that were present on the day of visit used calm and positive tones of voice, and encouragement when speaking with the children. The children did

respond to this well and appeared to have very positive relationships with the teachers.

Good health and safety practices were observed on the day of my visit. Karen does meet each child at the door to greet them which also allows her to assess the children prior to them entering the programming classroom. Good handwashing practices were observed with the teachers directing the children to wash their hands upon arrival, after restroom use, and other times as needed such as a child that assisted with placing napkins on tables that would be used during snack service. Good cleaning practices were observed with the teachers using the off day as an opportunity to sanitize and disinfect all toys and surfaces in the classroom. The center primarily uses bleach water for cleaning which is made fresh each day. The center does have a first aid kit which was well stocked with materials to address most common first aid needs. The first aid kit, chemical cleaners, and other items that could pose a safety risk to children were stored in areas where they were not readily accessible to the children. The center did have emergency response plans for those children that had identified allergies, or other health concerns.

Due to the limited hours of operation meals are not served but snacks are provided. The children take it in turn to provide snacks and a list of appropriate snack items is provided to parents. A copy of the snacks that are actually served is maintained. The program also maintains a small supply of snack items to supplement as needed and good food storage and handling practices are in place.

The center does have a playground space which is fully enclosed by fencing. The playground has a climbing structure and other toys for the children to play with. The climbing structure has two slide chutes extending off either end and it was noted that the chute that had previously been identified as being damaged did have a repair patch. Karen did state that the patch does wear off with use and so is replaced as needed, and the center is looking to replace that chute when the funds to do so can be obtained. Rubber mulch is used for cushioning ground cover and a good depth of material was present. The center has also added foam mats in the high traffic areas to reduce the displacement of fall surfacing. There is a paved area for riding equipment and a grassy area where children can play. Shade is provided by the building, play structures, and large mature trees located outside the fenced play area.

All required notices were posted in an area readily accessible and visible to parents and visitors. All staff files were reviewed and found to contain all required documentation and certifications though it was noted that the physicals for both Elaine, and Christine were not on the required form. All child files were reviewed and found to contain all required information. All inspection logs and certificates were available and current. The center does have a Radon Mitigation system and it was reviewed that recent changes to requirements does require that programs with mitigation systems are required to renew testing every 2 years to ensure that the system is functioning properly. The last documented testing was current and dated from 11/13/23.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

This continues to be a very strong program that has a focus on curriculum implementation. This has been achieved in part to the very stable staffing with all of the teachers having been with the program for a number of years and especially Karen as the director and lead teacher. Karen did announce that she and Christine are both planning to retire. Stated the program is searching for a new lead teacher but she is planning to remain for that individual's first year as an assistant to help with the transition and continuity of programming.

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

None Cited

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

A full license is recommended at this time. Please provide a written response to the licensing consultant identifying a plan to correct and maintain those issued cited as not meeting licensing standards with an anticipated date of completion. At least one visit will be made to the center during the following 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.