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

**Name of Center:** Trinity Lutheran School Early Childhood **Enrollment:** 100 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 41918

**Street:** 1361 7th AVE SW **City:** Cedar Rapids Iowa **Zip** 52404 **County:** Linn

**Mailing Address:** 1361 7th AVE SW, Cedar Rapids, IA, 52404

**Director's Name:** Jessica Kinney **Phone Number:** 319-362-6952

**On-Site Supervisor(s):** Mindy Rottinghaus (assistant director) **E-Mail:** kinneyj@trinitycr.org

**Date(s) of Visit:** 11-14-2024

**Licensing Visit** X **Unannounced Visit** X **Off Year Visit** X **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:** 02-16-2024

**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:** X 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 | 10 | 10 | 44 | 43 | 107 |
| Summer | | | | | 0 |

**QRS Rating:** N/A

| RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE: | |
|---|---|
| X | **FULL** license from 12-01-2023 to 12-01-2025 |
| | **PROVISIONAL** license from |
| | **DENIAL** of initial application |
| | **SUSPENSION** of license |
| | **REVOCATION** of license |

**Licensing Consultant:** Amy Lyons **Date:** 12-13-2024

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

Not applicable.

**II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:**

Trinity Lutheran School Early Childhood (TLSEC) became licensed in August, 2013. TLSEC is located inside Trinity Lutheran School and adjacent Trinity Lutheran Church. The program operates year-round Monday through Friday 6:30am to 5:00pm. TLSEC serves older infants (18mo) through school-age children. Current enrollment is 100.

Combined director/on-site supervisor of TLSEC Jessica Kinney. Ms. Kinney has been in this position since November 2022. Ms. Kinney has an associates degree in liberal arts, 14 years experience working with children, and continues to participate in much child development related training.

On 11/14/2024, program space was observed.

**III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:**

TLSEC is a well established program offering a variety of programming services to help meet the educational needs of families and children. TLSEC is celebrating their 11th year of providing licensed early learning and childcare. Congratulations! The program is located in a residential neighborhood in a predominantly urban community.

TLSEC has the following website for families and the community to learn more about their program: https://www.trinitycr.org/childcare.

The mission of TLSEC is "...to know Christ, to make Christ known through education...We are teaching children how to learn, not just in preschool, but all through their lives. We are allowing them to learn at their own pace and in the ways that are best for them..."

TLSEC has a history of participation in quality initiatives including local quality initiatives. The program received the 2024 Innovative School Lunch Makeover USDA Award, 2024 Innovation in Preparation of School Meals USDA Award, 2024 Breakfast Trailblazer USDA Award and the Small and/or Rural School Food Authority Lunch Trailblazer Award. Ms. Kinney discussed how Trinity Lutheran School is participating in a pilot accreditation program through National Lutheran School Association (NLSA). Ms. Kinney also talked about possible future goals for TLSEC including IQ4K and participation in TEACH/WAGE$ programs.

Trinity Lutheran School has been the church's greatest mission since 1884 continuing to expand it's early childhood opportunities. Trinity Lutheran School is accredited by the state of Iowa and the National Lutheran School Association (NLSA). TLSEC is a ministry of the Trinity Lutheran Church and is located inside the Trinity Lutheran School. TLSEC operates under a board of directors. Trinity Lutheran Church and Trinity Lutheran School do include TLSEC in their newsletters and many events (e.g. annual sweets and treats shoppe with music program, Treasure Swap, Cookie Walk, seasonal programming). School administration, church administration, church custodial staff, school custodial staff, school kitchen personnel and the board help ensure the program space is sanitary and hazard free each day. The school kitchen is inspected at least annually by the health department. Ms. Kinney discussed how the school's summer 5-year grant to

provide no cost community breakfast and lunch can include those enrolled in TLSEC. There is an AED on-site.

Director Jessica Kinney and on-site supervisor/assistant director is Mindy Rottinghaus. During the 2024-2025 school-year, Ms. Kinney and Ms. Rottinghaus will both be celebrating their 3rd year in a management role with TLSEC. The management team (e.g. Ms. Kinney, Ms. Rottinghaus) is knowledgeable of licensing guidelines as well as their own program's policies and procedures. The management team 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 work Ms. Kinney and Ms. Rottinghaus have done since 2022 to improve administrative organization has not gone unannounced and they are commended for their efforts! TLSEC encourages staff to participate in training hours beyond code requirements, including participation in the annual Lutheran Education Association Convention and Iowa AEYC fall institute. Ms. Kinney discussed the continued combination of seasoned and new staff at TLSEC.

TLSEC has emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. The program successfully navigated through the 2019 winter Polar Vortex, 2019 health (covid-19) pandemic, 8/10/20 Derecho Storm, 2021 food supply issues, 2022 infant formula shortages, 2023 air quality alerts and 7/19/24 global technology outage.

TLSEC continues efforts at optimal communication between the program/staff and families. The program has an organized parent-staff/program communication center, offers regular program newsletters, quarterly newsletters, utilizes technological communication resources, has an established social media page for families, and supports family programming activities. Family programming activities have included book fairs, fundraising events, Read and Feed, annual Trunk or Treat, Walk-A-Thon, holiday parties, community service opportunities (e.g. food drive, Toys for Tots), and family activity night. Ms. Kinney talked about receiving much positive family feedback as evidenced in the continued enrollment growth.

Building and grounds remain in good repair. Since the last review, an indoor large gross motor area was established, the outdoor play area pergola replaced, and some new materials added to the classrooms (e.g. simplay3 seats). Security and building access continues to be updated. Ms. Kinney discussed several future goals related to continued building updated. Classrooms have been rearranged, since the last review, in a thoughtful manner keeping learning at the forefront. TLSEC offers Christian learning experiences with Creative Curriculum to help children become independent, self confident, inquisitive learners. Curriculum incorporates social emotional growth, kindergarten readiness skills, guest speaker events (e.g. fire fighters, community helpers), off-site field experiences (e.g. local parks, swimming pools, AirFx, local creamery, a baseball game, local theater event), seasonal celebrations, and various enrichment experiences. Ms. Kinney also discussed how each classroom plans and participates in a monthly service project.

TLSEC partners well with those throughout the community including the local school district, early access persons, local businesses, CCR&R and health professionals.

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. Cleaning and sanitation reminders were observed in various area of the program space.

On the day of the monitoring visit, licensing observed this program primarily during nap time routines. Music could be overheard gently playing during nap to help facilitate peaceful rest. Throughout the classrooms, staff were observed providing children with nap time reassurances and nurturance. Staff were also observed tending to light cleaning tasks and curriculum preparation when children were fully napping. There was evidence of areas of study throughout the classrooms that included the fall season and Thanksgiving. Supplies to encourage innovative play were observed throughout the classrooms to be organized and ready for use after quiet rest (e.g. books, crafts, dramatic play options, building materials, puppets, puzzles). Children were observed to be enjoying the opportunity to rest their minds and bodies.

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

None noted.

**V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Licensing understands continued outdoor playground improvements are being made. However, please ensure cushion surfacing underneath equipment is replenished and areas of rusty equipment are remedied.

Considerations shall be made for all TLSEC staff and children to be able to easily get in and out of the secured outdoor play area (e.g. fence latches) in the event of an emergency situation (e.g. fire, community disturbance).

The program's license remains in full status.  Thank you for the visit.

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This report is to note an administrative change as the program's name has changed to Trinity Lutheran School Early Childhood.

*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.