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

Name of Center: Growing Tree Early Learning Center **Enrollment:** 34 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 52027

Street: 10000 Meredith DR **City:** Urbandale Iowa **Zip** 50322 **County:** Polk

Mailing Address: 10000 Meredith DR, Urbandale, IA, 50322

Director's Name: Cindy Kniss, Jodi Defenbaugh **Phone Number:** 515-309-3390

On-Site Supervisor(s): Ashley Defenbaugh **E-Mail:** Enrollment@growingtreeelc.com jodi@growingtreeelc.com

Date(s) of Visit: 02-22-2024

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

LICENSING VISITS

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

Signed Application (470-0722) Received X **Yes** **No** **NA** **Date Signed:** 10-28-2022

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

Date Inspected: 07-05-2023

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: X Infants (0-23 mo.) X 2 Years X Preschool-Age 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	20	12	33		65
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 10-31-2022 to 02-01-2025
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Melinda Larson, Child Care Licensing Consultant **Date:** 03-03-2024

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

N/A

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

Growing Tree Early Education Center opened at this location on 10/31/22. Cindy Kniss and Jodi Defenbaugh are the owners. Cindy Kniss is the owner of two other centers in Iowa and will be the director of this center at this time. Cindy has a Bachelor's degree in Education and has been the owner/director of Formative Years Childcare Center in Ames, Iowa since 2017. Ashley Defenbaugh is the on-site supervisor as of December of 2022. Ashley has three prior years of experience in a childcare setting prior to taking this role and meets qualifications for this position.

An unannounced visit was completed on today's date. Cindy and Jodi were present and assisted with the visit. Classrooms are well furnished with age appropriate furnishings, supplies and toys. Children's coats and belongings are kept in cubbies.

There were four infants present in the infant classroom. One staff was working in this class. There were four children present in the toddlers classroom. There was one staff working in this class. There were nine children present in the 2's classroom. Two staff were working with this age group. There were eight children present in the 3's classroom. Two staff were working in this class. A preschool room was not being used at the time of the visit. Children were observed during child directed and staff led activities. Some children were observed during lunch time.

The center serves morning snack, lunch and afternoon snack. The center has a full kitchen. Menus were reviewed and show compliance with CACFP requirements.

The center has two playground areas: one for toddlers and one for preschool age children. There is rubber tile and rubber mulch for surfacing material. There is shading in place. The center has completed monthly playground checks.

The center doesn't provide transportation.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

Two of the staff who worked for the previous owner are still employed at this center, both having worked at this location for 17 years.

There is a secure entrance into the center, the new owner installed a new security door system. There are cameras in all classrooms and on the playground.

The center uses the Bright Wheel app for real time communication with families.

The owner is looking into a partnership with the school district to provide the SWVPP.

The owner will apply for an IQ4K rating in the next year.

The center partners with AEA.

The families have been appreciative of the changes at the center and have talked about how their children have grown and learned.

The staff work well together and are a good team. They are knowledgeable and work hard.

The administration team works well together.

The curriculum is strong.

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

There were no licensing violations cited during today's visit.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

The center has a complete license.

*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.