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

Name of Center: College Community CVT Preschool & Childcare **Enrollment:** 8 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 51904

Street: 3000 J Street SW **City:** Cedar Rapids Iowa **Zip** 52404 **County:** Linn

Mailing Address:

Director's Name: Kathleen "Kathy" Schulte **Phone Number:** 319-200-3456

On-Site Supervisor(s): Megan Murphy **E-Mail:** kschulte@crprairie.org

Date(s) of Visit: 03-19-2024

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

Date Inspected: 05-08-2023

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.) 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			15		15
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 04-01-2024 to 04-01-2026
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons **Date:** 04-16-2024

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

Not applicable.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

College Community Early Childhood Center (CCECC) has been in operation for many years and operates several program throughout the College Community School District. Specifically, College Community CVT Preschool & Childcare (CCCVTPC) commenced operations in August 2022 and is located inside Cedar Valley Townhomes. The CCCVTPC license includes school-year only childcare for preschool-age children outside of the statewide voluntary 4-year-old preschool program (primarily located in the Community Center within the Cedar Valley Townhomes, morning childcare 2023-2024 school-year). During the summer, some full days of emergency closing (e.g. snow day), and some breaks (e.g. holiday, spring), this program has the ability to combine with other CCECC sites to provide full day child care. Current enrollment is 8.

Multi-site director Kathleen "Kathy" Schulte has a MA degree in early childhood elementary education. Ms. Schulte has over 25 years of experience working with children including during her work as a school principal and early childhood teacher. Specific on-site supervisor Megan Murphy has a BA in international studies, over 4 years working with children and continues to participate in much child development related training.

On 3/19/2024, program space was observed.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

CCECC operates multiple sites throughout the community that offer a variety of childcare and early learning programming opportunities to help meet the needs of children and families. CCECC is well-established and accepts a variety of funding sources.

CCECC has a history of participation in quality initiatives. Several CCECC sites have achieved and maintain NAEYC accreditation. The College Community School District is one of only eight school districts across the country recognized as a 2022 Fall “Lighthouse System” by AASA, The School Superintendents Association. College Community was recognized in the area of: Redesign for Early Learning. College Community Schools received special recognition for Strength in Early Learning Partnerships in Service for Highly Diverse Community.

CCECC has the following website for families and the community to access information about their programs: https://www.crprairie.org/. Specifically, CCCVTPC has the following website for persons to learn about this program: https://www.crprairie.org/news/2022/09/15/four-year-old-preschool-openings-available-at-college-community-schools-no-cost-to-families/

According to the family handbook the mission of CCECC is "...Guided by high expectations, partnerships with our schools and families, and extensive knowledge of child development, Early Learning Staff provide a broad range of educational opportunities that enable students to enter Elementary School with the skills necessary to ensure quality learning today for tomorrow."

CCECC is non-profit and operates under a Board of Directors. Ownership and management of the program has remained consistent. The management team includes multi-site early childhood principal-director Ms. Schulte, assistant director Erin Hill, administrative assistant Jenna Langhurst, early childhood instructional coach Sara Kayser, multi-site school-age coordinator Whitney Hinrichs, and site specific supervisor. Ms. Schulte and the entire CCECC management team are organized, and in turn, CCECC programs operate smoothly. Ms. Schulte and the seasoned CCECC management team have noteworthy systems of organization in place to help ensure administrative items are complete as required and maintained in a secure manner. There is a collaboration among all CCECC sites to share materials, curriculum, joys, challenges, and ideas/planning.

Since the last monitoring visit, CCECC has retained as well as hired some new staff. Specifically, staff at this location reported celebrating 2 years employment with CCECC. Many
CCECC staff have advanced degrees in education and early childhood development. Since 2009, CCECC has had an immense number of staff participate in the TEACH program. CCECC currently has 11 staff participating in the TEACH program. This is quite impressive! Each new staff is encouraged and given the opportunity to pursue a CDA at no training cost. Documentation indicates that CCECC employees often complete annual professional growth training that exceeds Iowa Code requirements (most recently all staff completing updated PBIS training). Management discussed how one CCECC was selected to be a PBIS demonstration site. Management talked about how CCECC values education and understands the link between education and quality programming. The program has a regularly updated professional orientation system for onboarding new staff and for continuous transfer of knowledge to seasoned staff. Since the last review, orientation has been updated to include more face-to-name training within the first 90 days of employment. The program utilizes the Iowa Wages Program. Management acknowledged the hard work their highly qualified team of staff do each day and who continue to show their commitment to the children and families they serve. Management discussed recent changes in staff compensation including vacation buy-back, increased wages and bonuses. Management continues to display their appreciation through staff shout-outs, special food days (e.g. soup day, sub lunches, baked potato bar, morning donuts, chocolate, fully stocked ice cream), and classroom door decorating contests. Management described their staff as "...an extension of a family..."

CCECC sites have emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. CCECC sites have successfully navigated through the 2008 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 and 2023 air quality alerts.

CCCVTPC continues efforts at 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 (e.g. use of App), and supports family programming activities (e.g. ReadyRosie). Inclusive registration events are held (e.g. recent meet and greet preschool families, parent-program conferences). Parents are invited to be part of the PBIS leadership team. CCECC regularly conducts a family survey and continues to note much program satisfaction with positive family feedback.

CCCVTPC emerged from a collaboration among many community partners including the College Community School District, Cedar Valley Townhomes, Four Oaks, Affordable Housing Network, and head start. The classroom is located inside the Community Center of the Cedar Valley Townhomes which also houses a community resource room, community computers and food pantry. Cedar Valley Townhomes is a vibrant community located in the College Community School District. The property has 186 townhomes, varying in size from one to three bedrooms. Cedar Valley Townhomes is owned and operated by the Affordable Housing Network a partner of Four Oaks. All partners involved have administration and custodial persons that help ensure the children's space is sanitary and hazard free each day. The program has regular access to additional areas within the Community Center including community resource room on inclement weather days, fenced outdoor space, and restroom areas.

The classroom is arranged in a thoughtful manner keeping learning at the forefront. Curriculum is designed to help children become lifelong learners. Curriculum is a combination of learning strategies including Iowa Early Learning Standards, Creative Curriculum (e.g. gold, cloud), Everyday Math Enrichment, Second Step, Jolly Phonics, Heggerty Phonics Awareness, and Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports. Curriculum also incorporates on-site guest speaker events and themed celebrations. Communication between children and staff is done verbally, with picture cues, and through sign language. The program has access to some rolling carts so loose outdoor/large gross motor materials can be moved from one area to another for use. Management discussed several future goals related to curriculum improvements (e.g. physical activity, gardening. whole
room of study approach).

CCECC sites collaborate well with many community partners including local businesses, health professionals, early access professionals, TIES, head start (e.g. new head start liaison), other local school districts, various non-profit organizations, ECI, and CCR&R. CCECC applies for and receives grants (e.g. expansion 2022, expansion 2023). Management discussed being proud of their continued expansion efforts to help meet the needs of the community and their waiting lists.

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, disinfecting, and sanitizing. Cleaning checklists and reminders are posted in various areas.

On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were observed to be nurturing and attentive to the children's needs. Children had access to an array of materials (e.g. books, imaginative play options, building materials, sensory items, craft) that encouraged innovative play. Activities observed were many (e.g. circle discussion with phonic work, small group activity, large gross motor play). Staff provided a companionable presence allowing children to have many choices in their play experiences. Routine transitions (e.g. clean-up, food service/breakfast activities, social graces) worked smoothly into the program's welcoming and cooperative play environment. Staff were overheard providing children with many words of encouragement (e.g. "You're a smart independent woman taking care of yourself", "Good job knowing your letter, kiss your brain") and engaging children in much meaningful discussion. 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:

Licensing strongly recommends a secure outdoor play area storage unit be established to help resolve possible challenges related to a sole staff transitioning children outdoors while also transporting loose outdoor play materials.

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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.