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

Name of Center: Apple Kids-Cedar Rapids **Enrollment:** 105 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 48222

Street: 1525 Hollywood BLVD NE **City:** Cedar Rapids Iowa **Zip** 52402 **County:** Linn

Mailing Address: 600 10TH AVE, Marion, IA, 52302

Director's Name: Hailey Stone **Phone Number:** 319-363-1539

On-Site Supervisor(s): Hailey Stone **E-Mail:** applekidsnoelridge@gmail.com

Date(s) of Visit: 06-16-2025

X **Licensing Visit** X **Unannounced Visit** **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: 06-05-2025

Comments : An updated fire certificate note dated 6/5/2025 noted the following: "...On site fire inspections and follow up have been completed at this occupancy related to a
small remodel project in the basement....Annual fire inspection for the occupancy was completed in November of 2024, with an operational permit issued at that time. Current fire department operational permit for the occupancy remains in effect until the next scheduled inspection date of November 2025...."

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 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	16	12	46	33	107
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

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:** 06-20-2025

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

Not applicable.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

Apple Kids has multiple programs throughout the community and has been in operation since 1995. Specifically, Apple Kids - Cedar Rapids opened on 1/2/2017. Apple Kids - Cedar Rapids is a profit program which operates year-round Monday through Friday 6:30am to 5:30pm. The program serves children age infant through school-age. Current enrollment is 105.

The Apple Kids multi-site owner is Kendran Sizemore. Ms. Sizemore started as the Director of Apple Kids in 2001 and then became owner in 2009. Ms. Sizemore has a degree in child and family services, over 24 years of experience working with children and continues to participate in much child development related training. The combined director/on-site supervisor of Apple Kids - Cedar Rapids is Hailey Stone. Ms. Stone has been a director with Apple Kids for over 17 years. Ms. Stone has several years experience working with children and has participated in much child development related training.

On 6/16/2025, program space was observed.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

Apple Kids offers a variety of early learning/childcare programming options to help meet the needs of children and families in the community.

The year 2025 marks the 30th year (16th year under ownership of Ms. Sizemore) of Apple Kids providing childcare and early learning services to children and their families throughout the community. Congratulations on celebrating 30 years! Specifically, Apple Kids - Cedar Rapids will be in their 8th year of operations during 2025.

The mission of Apple Kids is "...to provide a safe, nurturing, and fun environment for children ages six weeks to 10 years. Our focus is to provide an encouraging educational experience, promoting social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. Committed to the families we serve, our goal is to give parents complete peace of mind, while being seen as an excellent example of what a quality childcare center should be..."

Apple Kids has the following website for families and persons in the community to learn more about their childcare programs: www.applekidsmarion.com.

Apple Kids has a history of participating in quality initiatives including local quality initiatives. Since the last license review, Apple Kids - Cedar Rapids applied for and qualified to participate in CACFP. Ms. Stone discussed the CACFP staff-management training as well as having their first on-site CACFP visit which went well. Ms. Stone talked about future goals related to continued participation in quality initiatives, updating some windows, updating combine preschool and school-age room floor and renovating the upper level 2yo room to accommodate waitlist.

Multi-site owner Ms. Sizemore is a local entrepreneur invested in the community. Ownership and management of Apple Kids - Cedar Rapids (e.g. Ms. Sizemore, Ms. Stone) is seasoned and remained consistent since commencing operations over

8 years ago. It shall be noted, Apple Kids - Marion on-site supervisor Jason Snitko does sometimes assist at this location. Mr. Snitko has been the Apple Kids - Marion on-site supervisor since 2018. Mr. Snitko has a BA in marketing and a teaching credential and over 8 years of experience working with children. The Apple Kids management team 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. As a result, the program experiences smooth daily operations. Collaborate among all Apple Kids sites continues allowing for the sharing of materials, curriculum, joys, challenges, ideas/planning, and floating staff when needed. Ms. Stone shared how since 2019, the day-to-day operations have been as huge part of the program's success story.

Apple Kids - Cedar Rapids continues to maintain seasoned quality staff hiring only a few new ones. Several staff reported being employed with Apple Kids for 22 years, 18 years, and 3 years. Congratulations on staff longevity! Ms. Stone talked about the great team of staff they have acknowledging how "...they are here for the right reasons as they truly love working with children..." Ms. Stone discussed the program's onboarding of new staff, continuous staff training, competitive pay, flexible scheduling whenever possible and regular displays of staff appreciation.

Apple Kids - Cedar Rapids 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, and supports family programming activities. Classroom bulletin boards and enhanced monthly newsletters continue to be uniquely updated to capture family attention. Ms. Stone acknowledged the positive family feedback they continue to receive as well as the full enrollment with current waitlist.

Building and grounds are well-maintained. Apple Kids does have a multi-site maintenance person assisting with building updates and repairs. Since the last review, lower level classroom 3A underwent renovation adding a classroom enclosed restroom and increasing capacity! Regular refreshes and updating of supplies are always noticed! Ms. Stone discussed how enrolled "...children deserve to have and use nice things..." For 2025, those have included flooring-rug updates, new classroom Shark vacuums, new multi-piece soft infant climbers, a new spacious kitchen refrigerator, and updated areas for storage of children's personal items in the combined preschool and school-age lower level area. Kitchen is spacious and sanitary. In 2021, Culligan Water System/Station was established in lieu of use of the water fountains. In 2024, the program received a grant establishing outdoor produce and flower gardens allowing for increased on-site "farm-to-table" experiences (e.g. planting, weeding, watering, harvesting, tasting). An second NAPSACC grant helped increase large gross motor materials. Management (e.g. Ms. Sizemore, Ms. Stone) continues to rotate helping provide culinary delights to the children! Classrooms are arranged in a thoughtful manner with learning at the forefront. Children's accomplishments (e.g. artwork, "Blooming toddlers" door display! Unique You are One in a "Melon" and You are One in a "Minion" projects!) are displayed in various areas of the program space. Apple Kids - Cedar Rapids curriculum includes a combination of learning strategies incorporating Brightwheel curriculum and teacher-inspired ideas. Curriculum also incorporates off-site field trip experiences, on-site guest speaker events, themed days, holiday/seasonal parties, parent/teacher conferences, and occasional parent night out events.

Apple Kids - Cedar Rapids has emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. Apple Kids sites 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 (e.g. 2023, 2025) and 7/19/24 global technology outage.

Apple Kids - Cedar Rapids collaborates well with community agencies including the local school districts, health professionals, and various local businesses. Ms. Stone acknowledged the strong relationship specifically with Wright Elementary School which is part of the Cedar Rapids Community School District. Ms. Stone talked about their close proximity/walking distance of the school and their center's ability to provide full and/or part-time childcare to so many of their students. Ms. Stone discussed how Apple Kids - Cedar Rapids does provide transportation and/or walking services of 4-year-old preschool children to Wright Elementary School for statewide voluntary preschool programing.

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 supplies as well as policies and procedures in place for hand washing, diapering, cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing.

On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were nurturing and attentive to the children's needs. Areas of study included summer. Activities observed were many (e.g. infant cares, outdoor large gross motor play). Children have access to an array of materials (e.g. books, imaginative play options, building materials, crafts) that encourage innovative play. Staff provided a companionable presence allowing children to have many choices in their play experiences. Staff were observed to communicate with the children verbally, with picture cards, and through sign language. Routine transitions (e.g. clean up activities) worked smoothly into the program's welcoming and cooperative play environment. Staff were overheard providing children with many words of encouragement, utilizing positive redirection when needed and fostering 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:

A full license is issued. This report also notes an administrative change. Due to renovations, total capacity has increased to 107.

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.