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

Name of Center: Mount Vernon Community Preschool **Enrollment:** 37 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 25093

Street: 304 1st ST W **City:** Mount Vernon Iowa **Zip** 52314 **County:** Linn

Mailing Address: 304 1ST W, Mount Vernon, IA, 52314

Director's Name: Ellen Mueller **Phone Number:** 319-895-6286

On-Site Supervisor(s): Ellen Mueller **E-Mail:** mvcommunitypreschool@gmail.com

Date(s) of Visit: 10-24-2022

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

LICENSING VISITS

New Application **Re-Application** X **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: 12-09-2020

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			60		60
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 12-01-2021 to 12-01-2023
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons **Date:** 11-22-2022

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

Not applicable.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

Mount Vernon Community Preschool has been in operation for 57 years. The non-denominational preschool is located inside the United Methodist Church. Mt. Vernon Preschool operates school-year only Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 11:00am. The program serves preschool-age children. Current enrollment is 37.

Ms. Mueller has been the director of the Mount Vernon Community Preschool since May, 2020. Ms. Mueller has a BA degree in elementary education, over 6 years of experience working with children, and continues to participate in much child development related training.

On 10/24/2022, program space was observed.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

Mount Vernon Community Preschool is a well established program offering a choice of preschool services to help meet the educational needs of families and children. Mount Vernon Community Preschool has been in operation since 1965 and is currently celebrating their 56th year of operations. Congratulations!

Mount Vernon Community Preschool sponsors a private social media page for enrolled families.

Mount Vernon Community Preschool has a long history of participating in quality initiatives including local quality initiatives. Prior awards include a certificate for cooperation with Linn County Health Department by conducting a lead screening clinic at their facilities and a certificate for cooperation with Linn County Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program in promoting the health of Linn County children.

Ownership and management of the program has remained consistent. Ms. Mueller is celebrating her second full year as director of this program. Ms. Mueller is a director-member of NAEYC. Ms. Mueller is organized, and in turn, the program experiences smooth daily operations. Ms. Mueller has noteworthy systems of organization in place to help ensure administrative items to be completed as required and maintained in a confidential manner. Staff are aware of licensing rules as well as their own program's policies and procedures.

Mount Vernon Community Preschool continues to retain seasoned staff. All teachers have degrees in child development, education and/or special education. Each teacher also has additional experience either teaching in a school and/or other learning center. Staff reported celebrating 20 years, 8 years, 5 years and 2 years total experience working with children. Staff longevity is impressive! Also, staff's passion for being able to provide early learning is clearly evidenced in the impressive implementation of daily lesson planning. Ms. Mueller discussed having a great appreciation for their staff acknowledging how they often complete trainings together as a team.

Mount Vernon Community Preschool is a mission of the United Methodist Church. The preschool operates under a board of directors and has a parent advisory council. Church administration and the board help ensure the children's space is sanitary

and hazard free each day. Ms. Mueller discussed how the church does include the preschool in their newsletter. Ms. Mueller discussed a possible a future building project of classroom/wall expansion.

Mount Vernon Community Preschool has emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. The preschool successfully navigated through the 2008 historic Linn County flood, the 8/10/2022 Derecho Storm event and the 2019 pandemic.

Mt. Vernon Community Preschool continues efforts at optimal communication between the program/staff and families. The program has an organized parent-staff/program information center, offers regular program newsletters, utilizes technological communication resources, and supports family programming activities. Ms. Mueller discussed being able to increase and maintain some scholarship opportunities.

Building and grounds are well-maintained. Classrooms continue to be arranged in a thoughtful manner with learning at the forefront. Materials are accessible to children. Curriculum happens through play, is individualized, and is based upon each child's unique learning style. Curriculum incorporates science and math investigation activities (e.g. cooking activities, engaging literacy experiences) and also supports music which encourages rhythm, movement and singing. The Mount Vernon Community Preschool has a deep history of offering a variety of program/family events throughout each school-year including preschool orientation for families and children, annual parent-teacher conferences, fall party with local business trick-or-treating, an annual cookie walk fundraiser, Thanksgiving/holiday celebration, end of the year graduation/celebration picnic, library walks, and a visit to a local pumpkin farm.

Mt. Vernon Community Preschool collaborates well with community agencies including local businesses, various school districts, local higher education entities, CCR&R and health professionals.

Staff greet each family and child at the main entrance as they arrive for the day's programming. Staff engage each child 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. Staff were observed encouraging and engaging in hand washing at all levels. Staff encouraged children to "catch coughs" and "catch sneezes" in elbows. The program has policies and procedures in place for cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing.

On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were nurturing and attentive to the children's needs. Areas of study for the week included "There's a Spider on my Knee". Activities were many to peak child interest and included romper-stomper balancing skill work. Group discussion included calendar, music with movement, engaging storybook reading ("Mouse Lookout") and upcoming events (e.g. Halloween festivities). Children had access to an array of materials (e.g. books with welcoming cozy seating area, sensory items, imaginative play options, bear storytelling puzzle, magnetic letters, building materials, matching chocolates, wedding cake stacking, marble painting, skill building craft materials) that encouraged innovative play and social/emotional growth. Staff provided a companionable presence allowing children to have many choices in their play experiences. A one-on-one discussion overheard included how the child was building an "...ATV that turns into a boat...". Outstanding opportunities for creativity were happening! Routine transitions (e.g. clean up activities, snack rituals) worked smoothly into the program's welcoming and cooperative play environment. Staff were overheard providing children with many words of encouragement 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:

The program's license remains in full status. 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.