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

Name of Center: Ottumwa Christian School Preschool **Enrollment:** 8 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 24779

Street: 438 McKinley Ave **City:** Ottumwa Iowa **Zip** 52501 **County:** Wapello

Mailing Address: 438 McKinley Ave, Ottumwa, IA, 52501

Director's Name: Kassi Johnson **Phone Number:** 641-683-9119

On-Site Supervisor(s): **E-Mail:** ocsofficemanager@gmail.com

Date(s) of Visit: 01-06-2025

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

LICENSING VISITS

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

Signed Application (470-0722) Received X **Yes** **No** **NA** **Date Signed:** 01-07-2025

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

Date Inspected: 08-12-2024

Comments : completed annually by Ottumwa Fire Department, due annually

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: X Year-round School-Year Summer Only

HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General		12	27		39
Summer					0

QRS Rating: 1

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 02-01-2024 to 02-01-2026
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Jill Seibert **Date:** 01-07-2025

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

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

Ottumwa Christian School is located in a brick two story former public elementary school in a residential area of Ottumwa. The school offers pre-K through high school classes and has 3rd party accreditation through Christian Schools International. The school offers a full day childcare and early childhood educational program for three, four and five year old children in one of the school's classrooms. After school care is provided when the need arises.

The center is owned and operated by Ottumwa Christian School. The program relocated in 2017 due to a fire at the previous location. The new Director is Kassi Johnson. Ms. Johnson has a Early Childhood Education (Associate) from Indian Hills Community College with a Degree Completion Date: 05/19/2005. Kassi has been working at the preschool since 2021 and was promoted to Director in June 2023. The preschool employs the Director and one other staff new in 2024 .

On 1/6/25 I made an unannounced off year visit to the Ottumwa Christian School and met with Preschool Director Kassi Johnson and Principal Menninga. At the time of the visit, she was working on paperwork while children were napping. Another staff was also present. The preschool offers 1 classroom four days a week children ages 3-5 years old. The visit consisted of classroom and building area review and observations of activities, ratios, nutritional practices, health and safety practices, playground observation, field trip and transportation practices, and administrative review. HHS has had contact with the School Principal Tracey Menninga regarding HHS Licensing in 2023.

The mission of the preschool: We desire to provide an environment that encourages each student to develop their personal gifts and talents to develop a passion for Christ and the world. To simplify, we want the students who they are in Christ, be that person in Christ, and then do what Christ has set before them to do. Our role is to create the best situation to give them the highest probability of success for that to be accomplished. We want to create a safe place where students are loved, respected, and disciplined.

The school is kept locked during the day. Parents bring the preschool children to their room in the morning. In the afternoon parents come directly to the room to pick their children up.

Observation of Rooms:

The program consists of 1 large classroom. The classroom is spacious and open. The classroom is clean, bright, attractive and equipped with a satisfactory variety of child sized furniture, equipment, toys, games, and activities for the children. Both teachers have their own cell phones. An emergency outdoor exit is near the room. The classroom has a hand washing sink but lack direct exit to the outdoors. The room contains interest centers for the children including blocks, children's literature, dramatic play, puzzles and small manipulatives, toys and games, art, music and movement.

Storage is located in large closet areas. A bathroom with 4 child size stalls and 4 urinals is across the hall from the classroom (shared with K-5 students in the school). The program has access to a single restroom as well. All electrical outlets have been replaced with child safe outlets in both rooms. Paper towels were in a dispenser. Hand washing posters

were above each sink. The program utilizes Clorox Anywhere.

I have observed children during nap time during past visits. We discussed spacing mats appropriately (at least 3 feet apart). This rule is easily followed due to room arrangement. We discussed that lighting during nap time should be such that children can be observed at all times. This was not occurring during the visit. The program utilizes a napping chart which is best practice.

All electrical outlets were covered. Paper towels are in a dispenser. Hand washing posters were above each sink. On past visits the children rested quietly at circle time and played appropriately during free choice activities. During this visit children were engaged in table activities or free play after school. Space requirements of 35 square feet per child were met. The room is big enough for 18 children.

I have observed children during transition time, teacher lead activities and hand washing routines in the past. Children were following instructions appropriately and teachers were directing children when necessary. Routines were structured and children appeared to know what to expect.

During the visit ratio was met and maintained. Each staff should know what specific children they are assigned to so that all children are accounted for throughout the day. Both staff were aware of this the day of the visit.

Curriculum utilized is primarily ABeka, Positive Action curriculum. Age appropriate calendars and curriculum and related information are on the walls. The curriculum is teacher developed and theme based with a Christian values emphasis.

Center Nutrition Practices Observed:

The Preschool provides snack for the children. Food is purchased from the grocery store and chosen by the Director. The director is diligent regarding checking expiration dates. For the noon meal, children bring a sack lunch from home or may eat CACFP approved Pizza Ranch meals. Food is placed in the oven or refrigerator on site after delivery. Food is then served by portion by the cook. The center monitors meals brought from home and supplements any meals that do not meet minimum nutritional standards. The children in the program have the noon meal in the school cafeteria. CCR&R Consultant Lauer provided assistance for 2 years to the program regarding CACFP approved snacks.

Children bring lunch from home, it must meet CACFP requirements. If parents do not send adequate amounts of nutritional foods in the lunch the preschool supplements the lunches and the parents are charged for the supplement.

The refrigerator in the classrooms contain thermometers to monitor daily for safe food storage temperatures. Food waste containers were covered.

Monthly lunch and snack menus are posted in the hallways and classrooms. Food allergies are documented as they arise.

Center Health and Safety:

The center administers prescription and non-prescription medication in accordance with licensing regulations, physician directions, and parental consent. Allergies are posted. The ill/injured area is in the school office. The program has no children on medication this year. CCNCs visited the program the first week of February last year to conduct med administration training.

Storage and maintenance of a first aid kit were reviewed. First Aid Kits are out of reach of the children. A mobile First Aid Kit is taken outdoors and contains emergency contact information on each child. It is labeled and hung high enough it is not easily accessible to children.

Regulations regarding environmental testing and the maintenance of any necessary detection equipment were reviewed. A fuel burning appliances inspection is no longer required since the school is all electric. Radon testing was conducted with results under 4 pci/L in 2023. This test is due every five years. The school has a radon mitigation system. A carbon monoxide detector is in the hallway between two classrooms and 1 is in each classroom. The detector in the hallway is UL approved and non-battery operated. The building was constructed in 1949. A Visual Lead Based Paint Assessment was conducted per my request by Jane Matzen with the Iowa Department of Public Health. She and the Director conducted the assessment together in September 2016. The rooms and gymnasium have been freshly painted, as well as the lockers and doorways. The program staff will continue to monitor chipping paint throughout the building where the children are present. It was recommended an updated lead based paint visual inspection be conducted in 2024. The building is on city water, therefore water analysis is not required.

The rooms are cooled with window air conditioners. Several windows provide an ample amount of light. Windows can be opened to aid in ventilation.

I reviewed general regulations regarding safety. We discussed volunteers. Background checks and fingerprints should be conducted on all volunteers.

Staff belongings are kept behind the teacher's desks or in the supply closet. The program currently has no pets or plants.

Chemical cleaners are stored in a top locker inaccessible to children.

Tornado and Fire drills had been conducted per observation of documentation. We discussed the importance of the drills being conducted, even in cold weather. Drills must be conducted monthly for the preschool children.

Compliance with sanitation policies and procedures were reviewed. Paper towels are mounted in each room and should be mounted in the restroom. Staff are responsible for cleaning their own rooms. They clean in the mornings and after school. The room is clean during every HHS visit.

Center Playground:

The center utilizes part of their own separate playground for outdoor play. The area is fenced and shaded by the building. There is no natural shade as the area is asphalt. The preschool provides activities for preschool and kindergarten age play. The area features asphalt surfacing, and several small, unanchored, plastic activity toys. A new chain link fence with plastic coating is present. I observed play equipment and chain link fence surrounding the area. Bolts on the fence are facing the outside, so as not to cause injury. An adequate amount of play equipment and activities are present. The Child Care Weather Watch is utilized daily to assist in determining whether outdoor play is appropriate in varying weather conditions.

Square feet requirements of 75 square feet per child are met outdoors. Forty children can be in this area at the same time. The gymnasium is utilized if the weather does not permit outdoor play. Electrical outlets in the gym have been converted to child safe outlets.

Playground inspections were conducted monthly per my observation. An accident occurred and the outdoor play area fence was damaged a five years ago. The Director has already looked in to purchasing a metal pole and fencing material to correct the damaged pole and fence. It is recommended this be repaired in 2025. The program purchased new climbing equipment that CCNC approved. It will be installed in the Spring.

Center Transportation Arrangements/Field Trips:

The center will not provide transportation this year. No field trips are planned for the year due to the new location. In the past parent volunteers who transport children other than their own have been submitted for state and national criminal record checks. The preschool does not take walking field trips. Police officers from the community, Iowa Department of Public Health and the Fire Department give presentations to class. This year the preschool plans to have presentations in the building. Some years a field trip is taken to Oskaloosa to a pumpkin patch.

Center Administrative Records:

Child misbehavior is addressed by verbal reminders of appropriate behavior, modeling, redirection, and short time out periods of age appropriate length. I sent the Director DHS code on the discipline policy. Staff have taken PBIS training with Joan Garrett. The Director has taken PBIS Coaching. She completed the module trainings and is received one on one coaching from Ms. Garrett.

All required notices and postings were present. The Mandatory Reporting posting is hanging in the hallway outside the room, as well as License Consultant Contact information, Center License, Child Weather Watch posting, and the snack schedule. The preschool mission as well as the preschool schedule of the day were also posted outside the door. Poison Control and 911 are posted by the phones in each room. Evacuation maps are posted on each program door. No Smoking signs are posted at entrance/exits.

Staff and child records are well organized and mostly complete and are reviewed annually.

The parent handbook contains required policies. The Director added several missing policies on emergency procedures 2 years ago including (Written emergency plans for fire, tornado, flood, intruders in center, intoxicated parents, lost or abducted children for blizzards, power failures, bomb threats, chemical spills, earthquakes or disasters that could result in structural damage or health hazards). She also added an evacuation of immobile children policy.

Staff files are reviewed annually. Current physicals (due every 3 years) were current. I observed professional development training for the past year. Mandatory reporter training is due every five years. One staff needs to take this course. CPR/First Aid certification is due every two years. Iowa Criminal history record checks are due every two years. Updated fingerprints are due every four years. Updated professional development training is due annually.

Injury and accident reports are kept on file in the teachers' files. Parents review, sign and get a copy of each incident report. Incidents this year have been minor in nature.

Child files are reviewed annually, including updated physicals and immunizations in the files. The Iowa Department of Public Health conducts audits annually at this site. All children had current pick up and emergency authorization information. Current medical and dental information should be present. Field trip authorizations were present.

Annual Emergency Procedures training was conducted last year. These are typically kept in employee files. The former Director completed the Emergency Preparedness Plan. Staff will be trained on the plan in January.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The center participates in visiting nurse services.
The center has an annual presentation on dental hygiene by "Dizzy the Clown".
Staff appear to be interactive with the children.
Time is structured and activities are orderly.
Ratio has been excellent the past several years.

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

1. 109.10(15)c: Center shall develop procedures for annual staff and volunteer training on emergency plans. The Director agreed to train on the plan and sign and date acknowledgement of such by 1/10/25.

2. 109.11(3)a: Center shall ensure that: Facility and premises are sanitary, safe, and hazard free. Adequate indoor and outdoor space is provided. The outdoor area shall include safe play equipment and area of shade. Sufficient space provided for dining. Sufficient lighting shall be provided. Sufficient ventilation. Sufficient heating. Sufficient cooling. Sufficient bathroom and diapering facilities. Equipment, including kitchen appliances, are maintained so as not to result in burns, shock, or injury to children. Sanitation and safety procedures for the center are developed and implemented to reduce risk or injury or harm to children and reduce transmission of disease.

Lighting during nap time must be such that children can be easily seen at all times. The Director agreed to allow more light into the windows at nap time. A hole is in the outdoor play area fence and should be repaired so that it does not pose as an entrapment hazard.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based upon this review, it is recommended that this center remain in Full licensing status. The center is directed to continue to monitor day to day practice and adjust accordingly to continue to ensure licensing rule is met consistently. It is important to note, all DHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period.

HHS encourages you to contact your local nurse consultant. Child Care Nurse Consultants work with child care and early education businesses. Businesses may call or send questions to a child care nurse consultant about health and safety policies, health programs, health of personnel, and specific child health or safety issues. Please visit the following website regarding health forms and postings and other services offered by IDPH Child Care Nurse Consultants: http://idph.iowa.gov/hcci/consultants This program has access to Consultant Mikulecky. CCNC Mikulecky conducted a health and safety assessment, one file review, hearing screens and handwashing demos in the past six months.

Iowa Department of Public Health Child Care Nurse Consultant Jamie Crouse formerly provided consultation services on health and safety issues. Kassi has taken the initiative to work with CCNC Crouse since beginning this position CCNC Crouse stated on 1/21/24, "I have provided a spring immunization review, handwashing lessons for staff and students, hearing screens, oral health lessons in the spring, a health and safety checklist in FY 23, child health record check up and allergy action plan technical assistance. I know Joan has also provided quite a bit of PBIS. Kassi is great to work with, always in ratio, good classroom control and reaches out to me for guidance and is always receptive."

HHS encourages you to contact Child Care Resource and Referral Consultant Karen Lauer. They offer centers assistance with meeting the DHS regulations, QRS, infant/toddler concerns, room arrangement and environment, developmental concerns, Best Practice information, CDA assistance, or any questions or concerns you may have. The center is aware they may access CCNC and CCR&R Consultant on a consistent basis. The program is possibly extending services to 2 year olds this coming year and she can help with the transition. Child Care Resource and Referral Consultant Karen Lauer also provides consultation and educational resources to the program regarding curriculum, nutrition, ratio and supervision, routines and scheduling, etc... She worked with them in 2020 on QRS and COVID questions. She worked with them on getting food lists for snacks in 2021. In 2022 Karen Lauer took the new Director the HHS Licensing Notebook, example policies and went over the HHS Licensing Checklist. Three face to face visits were conducted in the summer of 2023 and 14 technical assists. In 2024 two on site visits and 37 technical assists. The low number of violations show evidence of proactive measures taken to ensure rule is met. This is duly noted.

The Director also accessed Joan Garrett (PBIS) the past two years.

This is best practice and duly noted. The programs' involvement with services is evident in program performance and number of program violations.

*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.