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

Name of Center: St Paul's Early Learning Center **Enrollment:** 71 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 25082

Street: 1340 3rd Ave SE **City:** Cedar Rapids Iowa **Zip** 52403 **County:** Linn

Mailing Address: 1340 3rd Ave SE, Cedar Rapids, IA, 52403

Director's Name: Julie Hanlin **Phone Number:** 319-363-6349

On-Site Supervisor(s): Julie Hanlin **E-Mail:** jhanlin@stpaulsumc.org

Date(s) of Visit: 11-02-2022

X **Licensing Visit** **Unannounced Visit** X **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: 08-02-2022

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: 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	28	30	40	10	108
Summer					0

QRS Rating: 4

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 12-01-2022 to 12-01-2024
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons **Date:** 11-28-2022

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

Not applicable.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

St. Paul's Early Learning Center (ELC) was organized in 1981 as an outreach of the Education Work Area of St. Paul's United Methodist Church. The non-profit program operates year-round Monday through Thursday 9:30am to 2:00pm. St. Paul's ELC serves children age 4-months-old to 5-years-old. Current enrollment is 71.

St. Paul's ELC director and St. Paul's Children's Ministry Director is Julie Hanlin. Ms. Hanlin has been the St. Paul's ELC director for over 5 years. Since the last review, Ms. Hanlin completed a BA degree in early childhood, became an active board member of the Linn County Early Childhood Board, and obtained national administrator credential (NECPA). Ms. Hanlin has several years experience working with children and continues to participate in much child development related training.

On 11/2/2022, program space was observed.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

St. Paul's ELC is a well-established program located in a predominantly urban neighborhood. St. Paul's ELC has been in operation since 1981 and is currently celebrating their 41st year of operations. Congratulations! St. Paul's ELC offers a variety of programming opportunities (e.g. full-time, part-time, extended day, summer day enrichments) to help meet the needs of families and children throughout the community.

St. Paul's ELC has the following website for families and the community to learn more about the program: https://www.stpaulsumc.org/early-learning-center.

St. Paul's ELC has a history of participation in quality initiatives including QRS, Teach/WAGE$ and local initiatives. St. Paul's ELC has achieved QRS 4-Star. Ms. Hanlin discussed future goals including including participation in IQ4K and seeking national accreditation.

St. Paul's ELC provides "...loving care and fun activities for preschool-age children using weekly themes and age-appropriate curriculum. We teach faith-based values that we all hold in common, such as loving our neighbors, sharing, respecting our differences, and caring for others. We welcome and respect children of all faiths.." The history of how St. Paul's United Methodist Church came to fruition in 1843 and the St. Paul's ELC came to fruition in 1981 evolving to present day is impressive!

St. Paul's ELC is a mission of the St. Paul's United Methodist Church. St. Paul's ELC operates under a board of directors comprised of parents, church members, and ELC staff. Church administration and the board help ensure the children's space is sanitary and hazard free each day. At times, the church does include the ELC in their newsletter and welcomes families to participate in various annual church events including upcoming Holiday Fair "Ring in the Season" and Trunk-or-Treat.

Management and ownership of the program has remained consistent. This includes St. Paul's executive director of early

childhood Julie Hanlin. Ms. Hanlin has goals for the program and herself. Since the last monitoring visit, Ms. Hanlin discussed how the program applied for and received some grants to obtain/update various supplies (e.g. sensory light tables, floor color tiles, STEM air tunnel, home living play set). Ms. Hanlin talked about how she completed her BA degree in early childhood, became an active board member of the Linn County Early Childhood Board (with nomination from former ELC family), and obtained national administrator credential (NECPA). Congratulations as this is outstanding! Ms. Hanlin is organized, and in turn, the program operates smoothly. Ms. Hanlin has noteworthy systems of organization in place to help ensure administrative items are completed and maintained as required. Ms. Hanlin and staff are knowledgeable of licensing guidelines as well as their own policies and procedures.

Since the last review, St. Paul's ELC continues to retain many seasoned employees. Staff reported celebrating 11 years, 7 years, 6 years, 4 years, and 2 years with the program. Staff acknowledged happiness in their employment and a true enjoyment in working with children. One staff was overheard joyously referring to the program's full infant stroller as "...the big limo of love..." Ms. Hanlin discussed how St. Paul's ELC continues to be an ambassador for the TEACH/WAGE $ program currently having 2 staff/management persons participate in the program making the commitment to invest in their educational growth as well as having a desire to provide a quality classroom environment. Ms. Hanlin discussed being proud of their team of staff and indicated how staff successes are acknowledged and celebrated.

St. Paul's ELC continues efforts at optimal communication between the program/staff and families. The program has an organized parent-staff/program communication center, offers regular program newsletters, utilizes technological communication resources, has an established social media page for families, and supports family programming activities. Family programming events have included preschool graduation celebration, open houses, and program/family conferences. St. Paul's ELC is able to offer 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 is theme-based encompassing learn through play, teacher-inspired ideas, common faith-based values, and social skills. Curriculum also incorporates guest speakers (e.g. community reader, library, music) and a studio room for enrichment opportunities. St. Paul's does offer extended day programming from 2:00-4:00pm and summer camp for children up to age 12-years-old. Ms. Hanlin reported 2023 summer camp enrollment will be starting soon in February 2023.

St. Paul's ELC has emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. The program has successfully navigated through the 2008 historic Linn County flood, the 8/10/2020 Derecho Storm event, and the 2019 pandemic.

St. Paul's ELC is a strong community partner and embraces what it means to be a "Neighborhood Center". They have partnered well with many agencies including other neighborhood churches, various school districts, local businesses, community nonprofits, homeless shelters, health professionals, CCR&R and local food pantries.

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. A list of cleaning tasks was observed to be posted in various areas of the building.

On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were nurturing and attentive to the children's needs. Areas of study included food for thought, giving thanks, and families. Clever artwork was observed to be displayed throughout the program space or actively engaged in (e.g. The 4s are unbe-LEAF-able leaf art, 3-year-old group/collage turkey art). Children had access to an array of materials (e.g. books, imaginative play options, building materials, crafts) that encouraged innovative play. Various activities observed included morning greetings, book reading, circle discussion (e.g. who's hear today, calendar, weather, day's events), and play experiences. Staff provided a companionable presence allowing children to have many choices in their play experiences. Routine transitions (e.g. arrival rituals, snack routines, clean up activities) worked smoothly into the program's welcoming and cooperative play environment. Throughout the classrooms, staff were overheard providing children with many words of encouragement and engaging children in much meaningful discussion. One child was overhearing saying "...that makes my heart happy..." with staff responding "...I bet you made your friend's heart happy too..." 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.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Push plate (ADA accessible, automatic door hardware) buttons are strongly recommended for various doors. Automatic doors can provide greater accessibility for all (e.g. immobile children) and help ensure ADA compliance.

Ensure the outdoor shade structure is secure.

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.