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

Name of Center: St Paul's Early Learning Center **Enrollment:** 50 **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: 11-19-2024

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

Date Inspected: 08-19-2024

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: 1

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 12-01-2024 to 12-01-2026
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons **Date:** 12-02-2024

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 Friday 8:30am to 4:00pm. St. Paul's ELC serves children age 4-months-old to 5-years-old. Current enrollment is 50.

St. Paul's ELC director and St. Paul's Executive Director of Early Childhood Education is Julie Hanlin. Ms. Hanlin has been the St. Paul's ELC director for over 7 years. Ms. Hanlin has a BA degree in early childhood, holds the secretary position for the Linn County Early Childhood Board, and holds a national administrator credential (NECPA). Ms. Hanlin is also an Ambassador for the T.E.A.C.H Early Childhood Iowa program and the Child Care WAGES program. Ms. Hanlin has several years experience working with children and continues to participate in much child development related training.

On 11/19/2024, 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 during 2024, is celebrating their 43rd 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 IQ4K, Teach/WAGE$ and local initiatives. St. Paul's ELC has achieved IQ4K 1-Star.

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 seasonal happenings.

Management and ownership of the program has remained consistent. This includes St. Paul's executive director of early childhood Julie Hanlin. 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 has retained seasoned employees as well as hired a few new ones. Staff reported celebrating 8 years, 2 years, and 1 year employment with the program. Ms. Hanlin discussed how St. Paul's ELC continues to be an ambassador for the TEACH/WAGE$ program, how 2 staff are currently participating in TEACH and how 3 staff are currently participating in WAGE$. Ms. Hanlin discussed how hard working their team of staff are.

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, program/family conferences and fundraising efforts. Ms. Hanlin talked about having at least one family engagement activity a month. A display inside the childcare space nicely showcased the most recent family activity celebrating the many cleverly created "family turkeys"!

Building and grounds are well-maintained. Ms. Hanlin discussed a bequest that will help with significant outdoor playground improvements planned for the near future. 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, Eastern Iowa Arts Academy, Little Sports Torts), a studio room for enrichment opportunities and summer camps. Current ongoing enrichment activity supports kindness and literacy through incorporating "The North Pole Ninja".

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, 2019 winter Polar Vortex, 2019 health (covid-19) pandemic, 8/10/20 Derecho Storm, 2021 food supply issues, 2022 infant formula shortages, 2023 air quality alerts and 7/19/24 global technology outage.

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.

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, cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting. Cleaning and sanitation reminders were observed in various areas of the center.

On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were nurturing and attentive to the children's needs. Areas of study included friendship, families and Thanksgiving. Children have access to an array of materials (e.g. books, imaginative play options, building materials, puzzles, crafts) that encourage innovative play. Various activities observed included infant cares, group circle discussions, and center play experiences. A great circle discussion was observed in the preschool-age room that included turkey inspired songs and a turkey feather game incorporating math and science! During center play, a sensory experience was observed to uniquely capture not only children's sense of touch but also their sense of smell. The 2yo room was observed to have a Thanksgiving inspired pie coloring activity happening. It is noteworthy - a 2yo child was greatly enjoying his day as he was overheard singing "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" and "ABCs" while he played. Staff throughout all classrooms provided a companionable presence allowing children to have many choices in their day. Routine transitions (e.g. arrival rituals, snack routines, clean up activities) worked smoothly into the program's welcoming and cooperative play environment. Throughout the rooms, staff were engaging children in much meaningful discussion and encouraging 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. 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.