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

Name of Center: Community United Child Care Centers-Valley Park **Enrollment:** 231 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 16036

Street: 1026 E Seerley BLVD **City:** Cedar Falls Iowa **Zip** 50613 **County:** Black Hawk

Mailing Address: 1026 E Seerley BLVD, Cedar Falls, IA, 50613

Director's Name: Jay Mattson **Phone Number:** 319-277-7303

On-Site Supervisor(s): Sara Koester **E-Mail:** admined@cuccc.org

Date(s) of Visit: 06-27-2025

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

LICENSING VISITS

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

Signed Application (470-0722) Received X **Yes** **No** **NA** **Date Signed:** 06-03-2025

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

Date Inspected: 07-18-2024

Comments :

LICENSE TYPE: X **Child Care** **Preschool (ages 3-5 meets three hours or less per day)**

Financial Type: Profit Non-Profit X NA

Accredition: Accredited X NAEYC NSACA Other 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	90	58	132	106	386
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 08-01-2025 to 08-01-2027
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Becky Frost **Date:** 08-05-2025

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

N/A

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

On 06/27/25 I made an unannounced licensing visit to Community United Child Care Center-Valley Park in Cedar Falls. I met with Sara Koester, the on-site supervisor for the program. Ms. Koester was previously a teacher and assistant director at Community United Child Care Center at Valley Park. She started with CUCCC in August 2015. She has been an on-site supervisor since November 2023. Ms. Koester completed three years of an elementary education degree. Nicole Crawford and Lacy Vaughn are the assistant program directors. Jay Mattson is the executive director of Community United Child Care Centers. The non-profit corporation operates three childcare centers in the Waterloo-Cedar Falls area. CUCCC was formed on 07/01/93 and all the sites are handicap accessible. There are 52 staff members employed by the center.

The program is in a free-standing building. There are computers in the entrance for families to check their children in and out of the program. The program operates Monday through Friday from 6:00 am until 6:00 pm. It serves infants through school-aged children. There are currently 231 children enrolled. CUCCC-Valley Park is NAEYC accredited, and it expires on 12/01/28.

The center operates out of fifteen rooms. They have two infant rooms (Disney 1 and Disney 2), two toddler rooms (Circus and Dinosaur), two two-year-old rooms (Dalmatian and Farm), two three-year-old rooms (Ocean and Rainbow), three four and five-year-old rooms (Bear, Panda, and Koala), and four school-aged rooms (Rain Forest, Jungle, Rocket, and Space). An inspection of each room was completed. All rooms were within ratio during my visit.

Windows provide natural lighting. The rooms are decorated with the children's art projects, and posters to assist the children with the learning process, such as the alphabet, shapes, colors and numbers. Many of the rooms are decorated with pictures of the children. The children's birthdays were posted. There is an area for circle time in the rooms.

The centers observed on the day of the licensing visit include library, Lego/blocks, table toys, games, puzzles, transportation, technology, puppets, geography, art, dramatic play, listening, writing, math, science/discovery, woodworking, sensory table, play dough, social studies, sensory table, and music. Centers were arranged in a manner that allowed easy movement between activities, but it also allowed for clear supervision by staff members. Materials were in good condition. The materials are located at child level, so they are easily accessible to the children.

The center uses the Creative Curriculum to develop lesson plans. The center has a monthly health lesson. Activities are planned around themes. Each teacher creates their own lesson plans and turns them into the office. The rooms provide monthly newsletters to parents to inform parents of activities and important events. Each room has a parent board that provides information, such as a daily schedule, lesson plan and a welcome letter from the teacher. There are also staff boards in the room to remind staff of certain duties and their work schedules. There were no lesson plans available in any of the school-age rooms. During the summer months the school-age room should have lesson plans.

There was a phone with emergency numbers and the center's address and phone number in each of the classrooms and in the kitchen. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and evacuation diagrams were posted by the main program doors and outdoor exits throughout the center. A daily schedule was posted in most rooms. There was not a daily schedule in the

Space Room.

The program participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The center provides the children with breakfast, lunch and a morning and afternoon snack. Shayla Parsons is the cook. The program uses a four-week rotation of menus. The menus are adjusted for the seasons. Menus and allergies are posted. The children are served their food.

The program provides one brand of formula, cereal and baby food for the infants. If the parents want a different brand, they must provide it. Bottles are prepared and washed in the classroom using the three-step method. The children's feeding schedules were posted.

The kitchen was observed to be clean and organized. The center uses an industrial dishwasher to wash dishes. They also have sinks available. The program has an industrial refrigerator, an industrial freezer, three refrigerators and two chest freezers. There were thermometers present. There is also a refrigerator and a small freezer in each infant room and thermometers were present. Food items were stored according to NHSPS guidelines in the kitchen and pantry.

The center uses bleach and water to sanitize the food tables and disinfect the changing tables. I observed the teacher clean and sanitize the tables for snack and lunch and proper procedures are followed.

I observed or discussed diaper changes in each of the rooms and proper procedures were followed in most rooms. In the Dinosaur room the assistant teacher did not wash the child's hands following a diaper change. I discussed this with her and she corrected it. There was not a pattern of disregard so this will not be cited.

There are multiple sinks and changing tables in the center. Handwashing and diaper changing procedures were posted in most of the necessary areas. Please post handwashing procedures near the sinks in both bathrooms in the Koala room.

I observed children from the Rainforest room being sent to the bathrooms down the hall alone and unsupervised. This cannot occur. Children must be supervised walking to and from the bathrooms.

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. I reviewed documentation of monthly playground inspections. A radon test was completed in March 2025 and is good for five years. Results were within EPA guidelines. Fuel burning inspections and a carbon monoxide detector are not necessary because the facility is entirely electric. Outlets were protected. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 07/18/24.

I observed medication sheets for prescription medications. Medication sheets must be completed thoroughly by parents and a start and end date must be given. There must be documentation by staff members for every day the medication is to be given. This includes days it was not given with a reason why it was not given.

The parent information is located on a bulletin board inside each classroom and in the entrance. The mandatory reporter, childcare consultant and the handbook availability were posted. The license was conspicuously hung. A no-smoking sign was posted at the entrance.

The outdoor play area is divided into four separate fenced-in areas. Three areas have rubber tiles for surface cushioning and have grassy areas. The school age area has artificial turf for surface cushioning.

The area for infants and toddlers has a tree playhouse, a tunnel, water tables, a small piece of climbing equipment with a slide and a stationary piece of climbing equipment. There is a tarp for shade. There is also an overhang on the building that provides shade.

The area for two-year-old children had climbing equipment with a slide, a tunnel and other activities. There are water tables, a stationary climbing toy and a small table with chairs for the children to rest. There is a tarp for shade. There is also an overhang on the building that provides shade.

The area for children ages three through five-years-old has a larger piece of climbing equipment with multiple slides, a climbing rope and rings. There is a tarp for shade. There is also an overhang on the building that provides shade.

The area for school-aged children has a large piece of climbing equipment with slides, climbing walls, monkey bars, rings, steppingstones, ladders and balance beams. Shade is provided by small coverings on top of the climbing equipment.

Outside of the fenced play areas there is a larger fenced area with a concrete area and a basketball hoop. There is also a very large grassy area. Trees provide shade in this area. Part of this area is naturalistic with wooden blocks and gardens.

The center also has use of a gym. There is approved fall surfacing in the gym. There are balls, hula hoops and other games available. There are basketball hoops, a loft to play on and balance beams with stepping posts.

Staff and children's files were reviewed at the time of the licensing visit. I reviewed 20 children's files. There were two outdated physicals. There was not a pattern of disregard so this will not be cited.

I reviewed five staff files. They were in great condition.

I reviewed policy and procedures, staff and parent handbooks. The necessary written emergency procedures and policies were present. Emergency Preparedness Plans have been completed.

There are several lead teachers that have longevity with the childcare program and they have a strong administrative team. Staff members are good at communicating with one another in the classrooms and I observed great teamwork. Several classrooms took the children outside to enjoy the beautiful weather. Staff members were actively engaged in activities with the children and introduced them to activities. They encouraged the children to use their imaginations during play. Staff members modeled good manners and taught the children to use good manners. In the infant room they were teaching the children some sign language. Child friendly music was playing in the rooms. Staff members were nurturing and I observed them holding children on their laps, rubbing children's backs and talking to them in a calming manner. Staff members provided the children with praise and used positive redirection when necessary. The children appeared to enjoy their time at the center.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

Ms. Koester states they have good longevity with the lead teachers and they have a low turnover of all staff.

Ms. Vaughn states they have a good group of staff members that are here for the right reasons.

Ms. Koester states they have a couple staff members on the WAGES program.

Ms. Koester states they are going to turn the large gassy area of their playground into a natural playground.

The program offers a fun summer school-age program with activities and field trips to keep them entertained every day.

There are cameras in each of the rooms and they are in a secure building. The cameras can record.

The center has vans to provide transportation for field trips and to school. The enrolled children attend Hansen Elementary, Lincoln Elementary, Orchard Hill Elementary, and Cedar Heights Elementary. The program has five vans.

There are pictures of the staff members in the entrance.

CUCCC-Valley Park is NAEYC accredited and it expires on 12/01/28.

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

109.10(14)a: The center and supervisor shall ensure that staff knows names and number of children assigned. Staff shall provide careful supervision.
I observed children from the Rainforest room being sent to the bathrooms down the hall alone and unsupervised. This cannot occur. Children must be supervised walking to and from the bathrooms.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

A full license is issued. All DHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period.

An administrative change is being made to name Sara Koester as the on-site supervisor.

*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.