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

Name of Center: Apple Tree Early Child Center **Enrollment:** 95 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 51852

Street: 1070 7th AVE NE **City:** Sioux Center Iowa **Zip** 51250 **County:** Sioux

Mailing Address: 1070 7th AVE NE, Sioux Center, IA, 51250

Director's Name: Melinda Eeekhoff **Phone Number:** 712-722-4336

On-Site Supervisor(s): Jessica Vermulen **E-Mail:** director.ecc@appletreechildcare.com

Date(s) of Visit: 02-13-2025

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

LICENSING VISITS

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

Signed Application (470-0722) Received X **Yes** **No** **NA** **Date Signed:** 12-08-2023

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

Date Inspected: 06-09-2022

Comments : Director Melinda Eekhoff is retiring in May 2025. The program is looking at hiring a director, owner Stacy Eldridge will be taking over as director at this time.

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

Financial Type: X Profit 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	65	24	75	71	235
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: Jana Drew **Date:** 02-18-2025

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

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

Visited Early Childhood Center on 02-13-25 and spoke with Melinda Eekhof director. On 06-27-22, the center changed to new owners and the center name changed from Early Childhood Center to Appletree Early Learning Center. Capacity remained at 235.

Ms Eekhoff has an elementary education degree and thirty four years of experience working with children. Appletree Early Learning Center is housed in a building that was built specifically for childcare located in Sioux Center. The center has 4 rooms providing care for children 2-5 years old and 4 rooms with infants. They have an additional 2 rooms one for school age and 4 year old preschool. The program serves children from infants to school age. The center operates Monday through Friday 6:30am to 6pm(they changed their hours from 6:00am to 6:30am in June 2024). Jessica Vermulen is the onsite supervisor. The program uses the procare app. The program has two days a year in (February & October) to where they close for professional development(PD). The 2025 year PD dates are slotted for 02-17-25 and 10-13-25.

There are 95 children enrolled in the program. The center continues in cleaning toys that children use. Sufficient amount of toys and equipment for the number of children. Daily schedule of activities were posted. Displayed throughout the room were colors, shapes, picture schedule for the children, job chart, children's artwork and the alphabet. Observed staff assisting children with a variety of activities, talking to the children throughout the visit, leading the children in exercise, reminding the children about rules, and engaging the children in activities. The center utilizes High Scope Curriculum. The program offers a 3 year old preschool program to where the preschool is now done in their current classroom. The program has moved some children around to where they have split up the infants based on their development abilities so have added an additional room. With the 3 year olds doing preschool now in their room they use the old preschool room for the 4/5 year olds.

The one year old room had the following areas throughout this room for the children to explore and learn: dolls, cars, kitchen, books and toys. The room has a variety of toys in the storage area that they rotate into the room. Sufficient amount of toys and equipment for the number of children. Changing tables are accessible in the room. Child size furniture throughout the area. Observed staff assisting children at mealtime. Staff had good interaction with the children. Snacks that are open should be sealed in a baggie or container.

The infant rooms 6weeks to 8 months and 8 months to1year. The center has the following areas throughout these rooms for the children to explore and learn: blocks, toys, books and mirrors. Sufficient amount of toys and equipment for the number of children. Colorful room. Room has changing tables and handwashing sinks. In all of the infant rooms the staff interacted in a positive manner with the infants. However, if under age 2 ratio needs to be in rooms at all time even if 1 year olds are sleeping.

Center Nutrition Practices Observed
Nutritious meals are prepared onsite in a kitchen that is inaccessible to the children. Refrigerators are clean and kept at the appropriate temperature. Good food storage practices were observed in kitchen. The center follows the CACFP guidelines for nutrition, however, currently are not on the CACFP program. The program does provide meals to the Headstart and

Early Headstart programs which those programs remain on the food program as they are a separate license. Menus were posted.

Center Health & Safety
Medication is stored in a lock box or out of reach of the children. Center follows proper guidelines for administering medication. Tables are sanitized prior to children eating. Observed good hand washing procedures by staff and children. First aid kit is sufficient to treat minor injuries. Fire/tornado drills are documented each month. Radon test was completed, however, the results were high in 5 of the rooms and need to be redone. The program has a mitigation system and may need to correspond with them for assistance. Annual heating inspections are complete. Good sanitary procedures are followed. Center has a functioning carbon monoxide detector. All program areas were observed to be clean and well maintained. Good health and safety policies /procedures are in place. Reminder that cots need to be covered while children are sleeping.

Center Playground
The center has a very large fenced-in playground adjacent to the building. Surfacing material is around all of the equipment on the playground which was replaced from woodchips to poured rubber. Due to inclement weather the playground was not able to be viewed and will be looked at another date. Monthly playground inspection is completed. Shade is available on the playground. The playground has slides, climbing equipment, swings, playhouse and tricycles.

Center Transportation Arrangements/Field Trips
The center does not transport the children. However, the school agers may go for walks.

The center continues to try to have quarterly staff meetings. The center has good relationship with their children and families. They follow the high-scope curriculum. Center also has staff who utilize the wages program. The program is on the IQ4K level 1 program.

Goals: The center is to find a new director as Melinda is retiring in May 2025.

Strengths of the center is that they have a good core staff and that the center has a good relationship with parents, children. The center is also very organized. The program have staff that have been with the previous center and has stayed with the new owners for more than 5 years. The program has a cooperate team for support to staff.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The program is on the IQ4K program level 1 out of 5.

The preschool room sends home a newsletter each month to keep parents aware of what is going on in the program.

Children's toys are at their level and accessible.

The preschool has parent/teacher conferences two times a year to inform parents of their child's progress and what they need to work on.

Display children’s art work in the rooms.

Center has child size furniture in all the rooms.

Staff have very positive interactions with the children.

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

109.8(2)e: At least one staff is present in every room where children are resting.If ratio reduced to one staff per room during nap time, does not exceed one hour and ratio in center is still maintained.Ratio in infant rooms is always maintained.

109.9(1)d: All files contain a pre-employment physical exam report completed within six months prior to hire and at least every three years. Physical exams shall be documented on form 470-5152, Child Care Provider Physical Examination Report.
Number not in compliance: 2

109.9(1)e: All files contain documentation to indicate that ongoing staff training requirements are met, including current certifications in first aid/CPR and mandatory child abuse training.

Number not in compliance: 3

109.9(2)b: All files contain sufficient information and authorization to allow the center to secure emergency medical and dental services at any time child is in center's care.
Number not in compliance for medical: 1
Number not in compliance for dental: 1
Information lacking: Information was outdated.

109.12(4): Sufficient toilet articles are provided for handwashing.Sufficient and safe indoor play equipment, materials, and furniture that conforms with CPSC or ASTM.Play equipment, materials, and furniture meet the developmental, activity, and special needs of the children.Room's arrangement does not obstruct the direct observation of children.Individual covered mats, beds, or cots, and appropriate bedding is provided for all children who nap.Procedures are developed and implemented to maintain equipment and materials in a sanitary manner.Sufficient spacing is maintained between equipment to reduce transmission of disease and allow ease of movement by children and staff to respond to activities and care needs.Sanitary procedures are followed for use and storage of personal hygiene articles.
Additional concerns: Cots need to be covered that children sleep on.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

The center will email consultant confirming that all aspects that fall below standards has been corrected by 03-07-24.

A full license will remain in effect at this time.

At least one visit will be made to the center during the next year.

*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.