Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Trinity Lutheran School Early Childhood

Provider No.: 41918

Address: 1361 7th AVE SW, Cedar Rapids, IA, 52404

County: Linn

Director's Name: Jessica Kinney

On-Site Supervisor: Mindy Rottinghaus (assistant director)

Phone Number: 3193626952

E-Mail: kinneyj@trinitycr.org

HHS Visit Date: 10/20/2025

Licensing Period: 12/01/2025 to 12/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 02/19/2025

Comments:

Report Visit Type:

- [ ] PTO
- [X] Licensing Visit
- [ ] Drop In
- [ ] Administrative Change

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

Quality Rating: 3

- [ ] Accrediation

Program Duration:

- [X] Year-Round
- [ ] School Year
- [ ] Summer Only

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HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday	6:30 AM to 5:00 PM		
Tuesday	6:30 AM to 5:00 PM		
Wednesday	6:30 AM to 5:00 PM		
Thursday	6:30 AM to 5:00 PM		
Friday	6:30 AM to 5:00 PM		
Saturday			

Program Population Served:

- [X] Infant(0-<24 Months)
- [X] Toddler
- [X] PreSchool
- [X] School Age
- [X] All Ages

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	10	10	44	43	107
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

Trinity Lutheran School has been Trinity Lutheran Church's greatest mission since 1884. Trinity Lutheran School is accredited by the state of Iowa and the National Lutheran School Association (NLSA). Specifically, this license pertains to the Trinity Lutheran School Early Childhood (TLSEC). TLSEC is a ministry of the Trinity Lutheran Church, is located inside the Trinity Lutheran School and operates under a board of directors. TLSEC became DHHS licensed in August of 2013.

Combined director/on-site supervisor of TLSEC Jessica Kinney. Ms. Kinney has been in this position since November 2022. Ms. Kinney has an AA degree, a plethora of experience working with children and participates in annual professional development. On-site supervisor/assistant director is Mindy Rottinghaus. Ms. Rottinghaus has been the assistant director also since November of 2022. Ms. Rottinghaus has much experience working with children and continues to participate in annual professional development.

On 10/20/2025, building, grounds and program space were observed to be in good repair. Primary programming occurs in age specific classrooms with children having access to sufficient restrooms and hand washing facilities. On the day of the monitoring visit, the area of study included the fall season. Evidence of previous days' curriculum included nicely displayed child artwork (e.g. Clever little turtle projects in kindergarten prep!). Curriculum on the day of the monitoring visit allowed for a variety of group discussions (e.g. oversized book reading with phonics work, bell passing) and play experiences (e.g. block building, games, imaginative play, outdoor activities) that were observed to pique child interest as well as encourage social emotional growth, innovation and child choice. On 10/20/2025, staff were observed to be in ratio and actively engaged with the children in a variety of activities that included infant cares, carrying out curriculum, food rituals, and routine transitions. Children appeared comfortable with staff and to be enjoying the day.

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2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

The mission of TLSEC is "...to know Christ, to make Christ known through education...We are teaching children how to learn, not just in preschool, but all through their lives. We are allowing them to learn at their own pace and in the ways that are best for them..."

TLSEC has the following website for families and the community to learn more about their program: https://www.trinitycr.org/childcare/.

Director Jessica Kinney and on-site supervisor/assistant director Mindy Rottinghaus are invested in the community, have been mentors to others in early learning and have helped connect families and children with various community resources and events. The management team (e.g. Ms. Kinney, Ms. Rottinghaus) is knowledgeable of licensing guidelines as well as their own program's policies and procedures. The management team continues to be organized and have noteworthy systems of organization in place to help ensure administrative items are completed as required and maintained in a secure manner. On 10/20/2025, management discussed having a great team of seasoned, professional, reliable staff who enjoy working with children. Management talked about how each lead staff in each classroom is a licensed teacher and how all other staff are working towards completion of a CDA by the end of the 2025-2026 school year. Ms. Rottinghaus acknowledged how she is a current TEACH ambassador.

As of 10/20/2025, TLSEC was again found to be maintaining the required postings, maintaining parent-program information centers, utilizing technological communication resources, and offering family programming activities. The program's primary curriculum is Creative Curriculum incorporating a religious component, Jolly Phonics, Heggerty, Handwriting Without Tears, teacher inspired ideas, guest speakers, field trips, enrichment experiences and seasonal celebrations. TLSEC achieved the 2024 Innovative School Lunch Makeover USDA Award, 2024 Innovation in Preparation of School Meals USDA Award, 2024 Breakfast Trailblazer USDA Award and the Small and/or Rural School Food Authority Lunch Trailblazer Award. Management discussed future goals of the TLSEC becoming fully accredited through National Lutheran School Association (NLSA).

TLSEC continues to have and update as needed policies and procedures that include those for safety, daily health checks, hand washing, diapering, cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting. On the day of this monitoring visit, staff discussed how they help ensure the children's space is sanitary and hazard free each day by following their current policies and procedures. Staff also talked about having continued supports from their board, school administration and school custodial staff as to the daily conditions and repairs of the building and grounds.

TLSEC has emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. Trinity Lutheran School and TLSEC have successfully navigated through flooding events (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, air quality alerts (2023, 2025), and repeated technology outages (7/19/24 global technology outage, 10/10/2025 AWS outage, 10/29/2025 Microsoft outage).

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

4. Any corrective action plans, provisional license, and safety plans-steps to get into compliance

Not applicable.

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

Continue to collaborate with the school board and school administration regarding maintenance of the school's outdoor play areas (e.g. adequate cushion surface depth, chipping/rusting equipment, power washing of outdoor equipment). If areas of the outdoor playground become unsatisfactory, the licensed childcare shall refrain from accessing those areas until remedies are made.

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Considerations shall be made for the school-age component of this license to obtain a wheeled cart to more easily transport materials and have those materials be more easily accessible to the children when using the school library for programming.

Please ensure any non-child friendly items are inaccessible and/or cabinets with such items are child proofed (e.g. 4yo preschool, kindergarten prep).

Ensure each chemical and spray bottle is properly labeled with name of contents and manufacturer's instructions of use (e.g. dilution if applicable, dwell time) (first steps room).

A full license is issued. Thank you for the visit.

Date: 11/06/2025

HHS Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons

Non-compliance with any of the mandated regulatory requirements listed above may lead to the cancellation or revocation of your Child Care License. Please take steps necessary to completely address each of the violations noted above.

Child Care Resource and Referral is an excellent resource for providers to access training options and support in your area. You can reach Child Care Resource and Referral at **https://iowaccrr.org**.