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

Name of Center: Collins Aerospace Day Academy **Enrollment:** 281 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 24371

Street: 1215 Skylee Blvd NE **City:** Cedar Rapids Iowa **Zip** 52402 **County:** Linn

Mailing Address: 400 Collins Rd NE MS 167-100Rockwell Collins Inc, Cedar Rapids, IA, 52498

Director's Name: Miranda Niemi **Phone Number:** 319-295-4440

On-Site Supervisor(s): Shelly Ness, Assistant Director **E-Mail:** miranda.niemi@collins.com

Date(s) of Visit: 01-24-2023, 01-25-2023

X **Licensing Visit** X **Unannounced Visit** **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: 06-01-2022

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	108	52	158	130	448
Summer					0

QRS Rating: 3

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 02-01-2023 to 02-01-2025
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons **Date:** 02-06-2023

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

Not applicable.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

Collins Aerospace Day Academy (CADA) is located in a predominately urban area. Since opening in 1986, CADA has underwent many changes in ownership, management, name, size, and location. CADA operates year-round Monday through Friday 6:30am to 5:30pm. The program serves infant through school-age children. Current enrollment is 281.

Paul and Miranda Niemi are multi-site owners of CADA and Quality Beginnings (newly acquired December 2022). Director of CADA is Miranda Niemi. Ms. Niemi has been the director since 2014. She has an MA degree in early childhood education and a BA degree in elementary education and teaching. Ms. Niemi is an approved childcare trainer, is a local community college professor, has a history of being a consultant for a local quality initiative, and provides mentoring assistance to many local childcare programs. Ms. Niemi has been the President-Elect of the Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children (IAEYC) since October 2019. Prior to this, Ms. Niemi had a role as High Preforming Inclusive Organization Chair governing board for IAEYC. Ms. Niemi continues to participate in numerous educational committees and cohorts (e.g. Public Policy Forum Committee, Linn County Children Coalition) throughout the local community. Early childhood boards in which Ms. Niemi serves include Childcare Solutions Group with The Iowa Women's Foundation (to help businesses open quality childcares for their employees and the community) and the Linn County Perception of Childcare Group. In 2017, Ms. Niemi was the recipient of the Chris Carman Award.

On 1/24/23 and 1/25/23, program space was observed.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

CADA offers many different childcare and early learning opportunities to meet the needs of families and children throughout the community. Programming includes before and after school care, a statewide voluntary 4-year-old preschool program, and school-age summer camp experience.

CADA has the following website for persons to learn more about the program: https://collinsaerospacedayacademy.com/.

CADA philosophy is "...dedicated to maintaining a quality learning atmosphere, and we strive to provide activities which allow for optimal developmental progress of each child in social, emotional, cognitive, language, literacy, math, science, physical growth and the arts..."

CADA has a history of participation in quality initiatives including a local initiative as well as QRS. CADA has a QRS 3-Star.

CADA has a history of participation in quality initiatives including a local quality initiative. As an initiative of the US Chamber of Commerce (https://www.forwardontalent.org/stories/collins-aerospace/), CADA was featured as a nationwide example of "shared services" in which a business helped establish a high-quality childcare and early education support for its employees and, when possible, the broader community. Ms. Niemi discussed collaborating with others nationwide who have since seen the article and are curious about wanting to also provide "shared services" in their communities. CADA

staff were invited to the White House for the 2019 Childcare Summit.

Paul and Miranda Niemi are local entrepreneurs owning 2 family businesses and investing in childcare as well as the local community. The program's owners and management team are professional and organized, and in turn, daily operations run smoothly. Management has noteworthy systems of organization in place to help ensure administrative items are completed as required and maintained in a secure manner. Management is knowledgeable of licensing guidelines as well as their own program's policies and procedures.

Since the last monitoring visit, CADA has retained seasoned staff as well as hired some new staff. Throughout the classrooms staff reported celebrating 30 years, 23 years, 21 years, 18 years, 15 years, 13 years, 12 years, 8 years, 5 years, and 2 years. Congratulations! Staff longevity is impressive. Ms. Niemi discussed continued partnerships and goals with the TEACH and WAGE$ programs. CADA currently has 5 staff participating in TEACH! Since the last review, employee wellness has expanded to include "hallway" miles, continued participation in Jump Rope for Heart, and mini posted hallway activities to encourage staff, children and families to stop and engage in a wellness experience. Ms. Niemi talked about many staff achievements and how management continues to support and recognize staff successes.

CADA has emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. CADA has successfully navigated through the historic 2008 Linn County Flood, 8/10/2020 Derecho Storm event and 2019 pandemic.

CADA continues efforts at optimal communication between the program/staff and families. The program has an organized parent-staff/program information center, offers regular program newsletters, utilizes technological communication resources, and supports family programming activities (e.g. "Backpack Connection") and activities (annual fall carnival and spring fling celebration). CADA has an active parent advisory council.

Building and grounds are well-maintained. Since the last visit, new gliders were obtained for infant rooms. The building has many nice features above and beyond licensing requirements. These features include lactation rooms with hand washing sinks, an employee break room with computer stations, age designated indoor large gross motor rooms, large areas for storage, a spacious laundry area, a conference room, and numerous staff/visitor restrooms (one of which includes a shower/clean-up area). The center additionally has many notable safety features including tamper resistant receptacles and door hinge finger shield guards. The kitchen is spacious, sanitary and organized. Classrooms continue to be arranged in a thoughtful manner with learning at the forefront. Children's accomplishments (e.g. artwork, milestone work) are displayed throughout the program space. Materials are accessible to children. Since the last review, the program has moved to Frog Street Curriculum which offers a specific individualized curriculum for every age and stage of development from birth to age five. Frog Street’s early childhood education curriculum offers developmental and learning continuums that allow children to build on previously mastered skills to more readily achieve new skills in a seamless and continuous way. Curriculum also continues to support a variety of learning experiences including STEAM programming, social emotional leaning, kindergarten readiness, on-site guest speaker events (e.g. librarian, nutritionist), teacher inspired ideas and music activities. Optional additional enrichment opportunities include "Music on the Move", "Little Sports" and "Daytime Dancers".

CADA continues to collaborate with many community partners including local school districts, the local AEA, Little Lions program, local businesses, CCR&R, and health professionals. CADA continues to partner with local colleges (e.g. Kirkwood Community College) and local high school students to provide a hands-on learning environment for students interested in a career working with children.

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. Staff were observed encouraging and engaging in hand washing at all levels. The program has policies and procedures in place for cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing. Cleaning supplies as well as cleaning checklists/reminders (e.g. A unique 1-page cleaning, first-aid, refrigerator/freezer temperature, disaster kit, and med bag checklist!) were observed in various areas on-site.

On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were nurturing and attentive to the children's needs. Areas of study included arctic polar animals, penguins, "Chinese New Year", extended family, compare and contrast, "blue and green" and "arms, hands and fingers". Activities observed were many (e.g. infant cares, large gross motor play outdoors, center play experiences, group discussions, finger plays, music with movement, book reading). Preschool 1 room was experiencing some unique circumstances on 1/24/2023 (e.g. ill child at breakfast, child drop-off comfort) and staff seamlessly responded without skipping a beat! PreK 3 room was observed during a noteworthy and spirited group discussion that included a reading of the book "The 3 Little Pigs and the Big Red Dog" with staff encouraging a comparison to a previously read book "The 3 Little Pigs and the Big Bad Wolf". Throughout the rooms, children had access to an array of materials (e.g. books, imaginative play options, building materials, sensory items, puzzles, crafts) that encouraged innovative play. Staff provided a companionable presence allowing children to have many choices in their play experiences. Routine transitions (e.g. clean up activities, putting on winter outdoor attire, food service rituals, nap preparations) 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. Staff communicated with children verbally, with picture cues, and through sign language. 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:

Ensure tall cabinets (including metal cabinets) and/or shelves are secured throughout the center.
Continue to ensure diaper changing surfaces are non-porous to help ensure proper cleaning and disinfecting between each diaper change (e.g. Transition 2, Transition 4).
Ensure the cook is providing proper dishes and utensils to each classroom for children to easily eat all foods served (e.g. oatmeal with milk option in bowls vs plates).
Continue to encourage staff to maximize the daily schedule to ensure each room has ample opportunity for large gross motor each day.

_____
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.