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

Name of Center: Montessori Children's House **Enrollment:** 144 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 25423

Street: 1505 42nd St **City:** West Des Moines Iowa **Zip** 50266 **County:** Polk

Mailing Address: 1505 42nd St, West Des Moines, IA, 50266

Director's Name: Shyamli (Rini) Kumar **Phone Number:** 515-225-1073

On-Site Supervisor(s): Denise Springer **E-Mail:** director@themontessorichildrenshouse.net

Date(s) of Visit: 10-30-2023

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

LICENSING VISITS

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

Signed Application (470-0722) Received X **Yes** **No** **NA** **Date Signed:** 10-16-2023

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

Date Inspected: 01-26-2023

Comments : West Des Moines Fire Marshal.

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 X 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	8	15	133	30	186
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 12-01-2023 to 12-01-2025
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Nate Knepper **Date:** 10-30-2023

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

N/A.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

A licensing visit was conducted on 10/30/23. The director was present for the entire visit and the on-site supervisor for a portion of the visit.

All areas of the program were observed. These areas observed consisted of classroom observations and activities, ratios, nutritional practices, health and safety practices, playground observation, field trip and transportation practices, and administrative review. The most recent COVID updates were also reviewed.

Montessori Children's House is located in West Des Moines. The center is a non-profit program and is overseen by a Board. The program has been in existence for over 50 years. The director is Rini Kumar and the on-site supervisor is Denise Springer. Rini has been the director since 2007 and with Montessori overall since 2002. Rini has a BA degree and is also an approved trainer for Montessori teaching. Denise has an accounting degree and has been with Montessori Children's House for over 15 years.

Montessori teaching methods are used in all of the classrooms. The six areas of learning children are exposed to are practical life, sensory, mathematics, language arts, cultural activities, and creative learning. Children learn at their own pace with the teachers as their guides. Montessori teaching promotes multi-age groups because the younger children learn from the older children and the older children benefit by teaching the younger children. A child must be 18 months of age to become enrolled and children enrolled at a later age must have prior Montessori experience. Special subjects of Art, Music, and Spanish are taught by teachers on certain days.

There are a total of 9 classrooms, although not all of them are in use at this time. Parents may choose full-time or part-time options for their child. There is a summer program for roughly five weeks in the summer. Those hours are 8:30am - 5:30pm. Otherwise, the center is open during the school year from 7:30am - 6:00pm

During the visit, children were observed in a variety of activities that included, but were not limited to playing on the playground, engaged in free-choice play at the different learning stations in classrooms, washing hands before heading upstairs for lunch, and large group story activities facilitated by staff. Staff and children were conversing in every classroom and staff were engaged and attending to all children.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The center is celebrating their 55th anniversary this year.

There is a secure entrance into the building. There are also security cameras located in several areas outside.

The center utilizes their nurse consultant as needed.

Monthly staff meetings are held. In addition to these meetings, monthly study/group discussions are held with all staff.

Each classroom has a monthly newsletter that is sent home to parents. Seasonally, there is a "center wide" newsletter sent to parents. Many teachers have on-line blogs (Google Classroom) that parents can view on the center's website.

All lead teachers have degrees. There are many tenured staff members who continue to work at this center as well as a few newer staff members. The director stated she had a great group of staff who work well together. Communication is stressed among staff.

There is a phone in each classroom. A PA system was installed at the end of 2013. An emergency weather alert system was also installed.

Each classroom has their own fenced in court yard area connected to the classroom that is accessible by the back doors to each classroom.

Staff and Board member pictures are posted in the main parent board area.

A new roof was added in the summer of 2023. The siding along the back of the building is currently being replaced.

As an option/courtesy to parents, staff will go outside to pick-up and drop-off children to parents curbside at the beginning and end of the day. Parent involvement is also stressed.

There is a janitorial cleaning company that cleans the center daily.

There are staff in-service days three times out of the year for staff to get training completed.

Staff were again engaged with children at different learning stations/activities that children were involved with. Good staff demeanor and redirection was given to a child who was acting out.

The center does online enrollment.

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

237A.7: Information regarding a child in a child care center or their relative is confidential. If this information is released by visual, verbal or written means, written consent from the parent or guardian is in the file or a court order allowing the release of the information.
There was some allergy/medical information posted in classrooms that either needs to be covered or have parent authorization to post this information.

109.11(3)a: Center shall ensure that: Facility and premises are sanitary, safe, and hazard free. Adequate indoor and outdoor space is provided. The outdoor area shall include safe play equipment and area of shade.
1. On one of the courtyard playgrounds, there was a slide. However, the courtyard is grass and grass is not considered a sufficient surfacing for climbing structures.
2. There were some dangling cords in the napping room that need to be more securely tied together and tucked behind other equipment.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Radon testing is due every two years and was last tested 10/6/23 - 10/10/23. All but one classroom came back with radon levels below the 4.0 cutoff. The center is working with a radon mitigation specialist currently. The center will have to stay on the two year radon testing plan for now.

The furnaces are checked quarterly and were last inspected in 10/2023.

It was previously noted that for transportation/field trips, parents are required to transport their own child to/from the field trip destination. There are some parent drivers as well, but they go through record checks as required if in ratio, alone with children other than their own, and/or have direct responsibility for child care.

I-Power and IQ4K were discussed at the visit.

A medication authorization/documentation form was sent to the director after the visit concluded.

For the lower classrooms, it should be noted on the daily schedule when children have the option of eating their daily snacks. Only lunch was listed.

A new, full, two-year license is recommended.

*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.