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

Name of Center: Trinity Early Childhood Academy **Enrollment:** 91 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 41918

Street: 1361 7th AVE SW **City:** Cedar Rapids Iowa **Zip** 52404 **County:** Linn

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

Director's Name: Jessica Kinney **Phone Number:** 319-362-6952

On-Site Supervisor(s): Mindy Rottinghaus (assistant director) **E-Mail:** kinneyj@trinitycr.org

Date(s) of Visit: 11-15-2023

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: 02-16-2023

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	10	10	44	25	89
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: Amy Lyons **Date:** 12-06-2023

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

Not applicable.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

Trinity Early Childhood Academy (TECA) became licensed in August, 2013. This program is non-profit and operates under a board of directors. TECA is located inside the Trinity Lutheran School building. The program operates year-round Monday through Friday 6:30am to 6:00pm. TECA serves older infants (18mo) through school-age children. Current enrollment is 91.

Combined director/on-site supervisor of TECA Jessica Kinney. Ms. Kinney has been in this position since November 2022. Ms. Kinney has an associates degree in liberal arts, 13 years experience working with children, and continues to participate in much child development related training.

On 11/15/2023, program space was observed.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

TECA is a well established program offering a variety of programming services to help meet the educational needs of families and children. TECA is celebrating their 10th year of providing licensed early learning and childcare. Congratulations! The program is located in a residential neighborhood in a predominantly urban community.

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

The mission of TECA 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..."

TECA has a history of participation in quality initiatives including QRS and local quality initiatives. Ms. Kinney discussed current participation in IQ4K.

TECA is a ministry of the Trinity Lutheran Church and is located inside the Trinity Lutheran School. Trinity Lutheran School has been the church's greatest mission since 1884 continuing to expand it's early childhood opportunities. Trinity Lutheran School is accredited by the State of Iowa's educational accreditation program. Trinity Lutheran School has also been through an intensive accreditation process with the National Lutheran School Association, and received one of the highest accreditation rankings within their program. TECA operates under a board of directors. Trinity Lutheran Church and School do include TECA in their newsletters and many events (e.g. annual sweets and treats shoppe with music program, Treasure Swap, Cookie Walk, seasonal programming). School administration, church administration, church custodial staff, school custodial staff, school kitchen personnel and the board help ensure the program space is sanitary and hazard free each day. The school kitchen is inspected at least annually by the health department. Ms. Kinney discussed how the school's summer 5-year grant to provide no cost community breakfast and lunch can include those enrolled in TECA. There is an AED on-site.

Director Jessica Kinney and on-site supervisor/assistant director is Mindy Rottinghaus are both celebrating their first year of being in the management role. 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 is organized and has noteworthy systems of organization in place to help ensure administrative items are completed as required and maintained in a secure manner. As a result, the program experiences smooth daily operations. Management discussed having 3 licensed teachers on staff with 1 being a resource teacher. TEAC encourages staff to participate in training hours beyond what is required by Iowa Code including participation in the annual Lutheran Education Association Convention and Iowa AEYC fall institute. Ms. Kinney discussed the continued combination of seasoned and new staff at TECA.

TECA has emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. The program successfully navigated through the 2019 winter Polar Vortex, 2019 (health COVID) pandemic, 8/10/2020 Derecho Storm and 2023 air quality issues.

TECA continues efforts at optimal communication between the program/staff and families. The program has an organized parent-staff/program communication center, offers regular program newsletters, quarterly newsletters, utilizes technological communication resources, has an established social media page for families, and supports family programming activities. Family programming activities have included book fairs, fundraising events, Read and Feed, annual Trunk or Treat, Walk-A-Thon, holiday parties, community service opportunities (e.g. food drive, Toys for Tots), and family activity night. Ms. Kinney discussed how the program recently sponsored a family survey receiving much positive feedback as well as some reflection for continued improvements.

Building and grounds remain in good repair. Since the last review, the program increased staff's ability to communicate with one another when in different program areas and obtained some new outdoor playground items (e.g. gaga ball, balance steps, garden boxes, sensory-activity path). Ms. Kinney discussed future goals related to building communication upgrades. Classrooms have been rearranged in a thoughtful manner with learning at the forefront. TECA offers Christian learning experiences with Creative Curriculum to help children become independent, self confident, inquisitive learners. Curriculum also incorporates social emotional growth, kindergarten readiness skills, guest speaker events (e.g. fire fighters, community helpers), off-site field experiences (e.g. local parks, swimming pools, AirFx, local creamery, a baseball game, local theater event), seasonal celebrations, and various enrichment experiences. Ms. Kinney discussed summer 2023 garden child enrichment opportunities including making spaghetti sauce with their center-grown vegetables. Ms. Kinney also talked about how the children recently made cookies for local law enforcement guest speakers.

TECA partners well with those throughout the community including the local school district, early access persons, local businesses, CCR&R and health professionals.

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. The program has policies and procedures in place for hand washing, cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting. Sanitation reminders were observed to be posted in various areas of the center.

On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were nurturing and attentive to the children's needs. Areas of study throughout the center included "The New Land", turkey, and Thanksgiving. Activities observed were many (e.g. infant cares, outdoor large gross motor play, center play, group circle activity incorporating phonics/rhyming). Children had access to an array of materials (e.g. books, water colors, dramatic play options, building materials, puppets, puzzles) 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, daily greeting/program arrival, food service) worked smoothly into the program's welcoming and cooperative play environment. Staff were overheard providing children with many words of encouragement, engaging children in much meaningful discussion and utilizing positive redirection when needed. 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:

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.