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

Name of Center: Prairie Rose Montessori School **Enrollment:** 30 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 52456

Street: 6203 Chancellor DR **City:** Cedar Falls Iowa **Zip** 50613 **County:** Black Hawk

Mailing Address: 6203 Chancellor DR, Cedar Falls, IA, 50613

Director's Name: Gretchen Koinzan **Phone Number:** 319-260-2208

On-Site Supervisor(s): Gretchen Koinzan **E-Mail:** prairierosemontessori@gmail.com

Date(s) of Visit: 06-18-2025

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

LICENSING VISITS

New Application **Re-Application** X **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: 04-23-2024

Comments :

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: Infants (0-23 mo.) X 2 Years X Preschool-Age School-Age

Get-Well Evening Care Special Needs

SCHEDULE: X Year-round School-Year Summer Only

HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summary Only*

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General	0	10	20	0	30
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 12-04-2024 to 08-01-2026
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Becky Frost **Date:** 07-31-2025

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

N/A

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

On 06/18/25 I made an unannounced off year licensing visit to Prairie Rose Montessori School in Cedar Falls. I met with Gretchen Koinzan, the director and lead guide/teacher. She completed the North American Montessori Training. She was previously a director at a different Montessori school in Cedar Falls that closed and she has several years of experience as a Montessori lead teacher. The program employs six staff members in addition to Ms. Koinzan.

Prairie Rose Montessori School is in a free standing building in an industrial area of Cedar Falls. The program was given permission to open on 04/23/24. The program operates Monday through Friday from 7:15 am until 5:30 pm. It serves children aged two-years-old through preschool (ages 2-6). Ther are currently 30 children enrolled.

The Montessori philosophy is “founded on the premise that all young children pass through a well-defined sequence of steps to maturity, but at different rates of growth and in different ways. Growth is as individual as each child. Advancement within a child varies from skill to skill.” Montessori respects individual differences that are natural to the child. A child has a deep need for purposeful, concrete work. A child learns most effectively when the learning experience emphasizes the process of learning rather than the outward products most traditionally emphasized in education.

The program operates out of three rooms. The older children have a larger classroom and this is where the dining area is located. The toddler students operate out of two smaller rooms at the front of the building. An inspection of each room was completed.

The subject areas in the Montessori classroom include Daily Living, Sensorial, Mathematics, Language, Science, Geography, Art, Music and Computer. Centers/works are established in each of these areas and children move at their own pace. The area was arranged so there was plenty of space for the children to move between activities. Materials were in good order and offered a lot of choices and variety for the children. The classroom is equipped with specially designed and sequenced materials.

The curriculum is based on the Montessori philosophy. There are no themes. Children are allowed to move freely between areas and teachers use direct instruction to teach them. A typical day includes small group time, works, vocabulary and reviewing colors and shapes.

The program uses the Brightwheel app to communicate with parents. Ms. Koinzan is still working with a coach and she received a technology grant to purchase tablets.

There are two bathrooms located between the two primary classrooms. Each bathroom has one toilet and one sink. There is also a changing table and a sink outside of the bathrooms. Handwashing and diaper changing procedures were posted.

I observed a diaper change and proper procedures are followed. Ms. Koinzan states the Montessori method has staff members change children while they are standing up but they have a changing table in case it is necessary.

The program uses Purell Surface Sanitizer to sanitize food tables. The program uses Clorox Disinfecting Mist to disinfect the changing table. The disinfectant has a dwell time of ten minutes.

As part of the Montessori method, children are offered naps. Roll-up mats are used to nap.

There was a phone in the office and emergency numbers with the school's address and phone number were posted. The emergency posting was also in the classrooms. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and evacuation diagrams were posted by the main program doors and outdoor exits in the program. A daily schedule was posted.

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills.

The program did not have any documentation of monthly playground inspections. You must begin doing these immediately. This documentation must be available for review during licensing visits.

Radin testing was completed in June 2025 and is good for five years. Results were within EPA guidelines.

The furnace was installed on 12/27/23. An inspection of all gas burning appliances, including the furnace, must occur every year and the documentation must be available for review. The program did not have an annual fuel burning inspection. Please get this done prior to heating season and have the documentation available for review during licensing visits.

The carbon monoxide detectors are part of the fire system on the ceilings. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 04/12/24.

The program provides a morning and afternoon snack. The children bring their own lunch each day. Lunches are monitored to make sure they meet the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines. Children come get their snacks on their own time and clean up after themselves, as part of the Montessori method. Staff members portion out the snack for the younger students. A snack menu is maintained for the morning snack, but not the afternoon snack. You must have menus available for review during licensing visits and both the morning and afternoon snack must be documented. They always serve a fruit and a grain.

Food items were stored according to NHSPS guidelines. There is a refrigerator and thermometers were present. There is a water dispenser in the dining area and the children get their own water. The program also placed a filter on the sink in the classroom so the children can have cleaner drinking water.

The program is not using the three step method to wash dishes. This is required. You must sanitize all dishes after washing them with soap and water.

The parent information is located on a bulletin board inside the entrance. The mandatory reporter information was posted. The child care consultant and the handbook availability were posted. The license was conspicuously hung.

The school has a fenced-in outdoor play area/classroom. The area is completely natural and does not require fall surfacing. There are two small sand areas and steppingstones. There is an area for transportation, woodworking, sensory play with dirt and woodchips and water play. There is an art area. There is a practical living area (dramatic play) and pushing and riding toys. There are picnic tables and a bench for the children to rest. Trees provide shade. A water cooler is outside in case the children are thirsty. The center has water play on Fridays.

The teachers in the program are enthusiastic and provide a fun learning environment for the children. The multi-age classrooms are great for developing mentorship and leadership among the children. The child-directed classroom environment teaches the children independence. The teachers were observed on the floor teaching the children how to use the learning materials. Staff members are encouraging and provide the children with praise. They are patient and use positive redirection when necessary. Teachers have great teamwork and a good classroom routine. They were flexible and spent a lot of time outside with the children.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

Ms. Koinzan states they offer families a safe secure place for children to learn and be care for.

Ms. Koinzan states she has kind, experienced and supportive staff members.

Ms. Koinzan states staff members get along with one another, so they have a non-toxic environment and no negativity.

Ms. Koinzan states she gives a lot of time and devotion to the families and children. She wants them to know they come

first. She believes in flexibility while also providing a safe place for children.

Ms. Koinzan states they have an inclusive program.

Ms. Koinzan states they offer a multi-cultural environment and diversity.

Ms. Koinzan works closely with Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) and AEA regularly. Cindy Wolf, the childcare nurse consultant, has also made several visits to the program.

Ms. Koinzan states their enrollment is all from word of mouth.

Ms. Koinzan states they won the Best of the Best award for Montessori schools. They must get a 95% approval rating to be awarded this.

Ms. Koinzan states they are using the Brightwheel app and they are still involved with coaching. They are going to start using Gusto for billing, which partners with Brightwheel.

Ms. Koinzan states she plans to apply for IQ4K in the future.

Ms. Koinzan states they added flower beds in front of the program at the end of the school year and each family brought a flower that they planted as a family. The children help water and care for them. The children also helped the program plant wild flowers.

The program plans to start a vegetable garden.

Ms. Koinzan states at some point they want to start fundraising so they can offer scholarships to families.

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

109.13(1 and 2): Center shall serve each child a full, nutritionally balanced meal as defined by CACFP guidelines.Staff shall provide supervision at table during snacks and meals.Children at center two hours or longer shall be offered food of not less than two hours and no more than three hours apart unless child is asleep.Menus shall be made available to parents and kept on file with substitutions noted.Avoid foods with high incident rate of causing choking.
A snack menu is maintained for the morning snack, but not the afternoon snack. You must have menus available for review during licensing visits and both the morning and afternoon snack must be documented.

109.13(5)c: Sanitary methods are used for dishwashing sufficient to prevent transmission of disease.
The program is not using the three step method to wash dishes. This is required. You must sanitize all dishes after washing them with soap and water.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

A full license is issued for the remainder of the licensing period. All DHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period.

*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.