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

Name of Center: Happy Hearts Montessori Daycare and Preschool **Enrollment:** 24 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 52590

Street: 8509 Alice AVE **City:** Clive Iowa **Zip** 50325 **County:** Polk

Mailing Address: 8509 Alice AVE, Clive, IA, 50325

Director's Name: Maria Mondragon **Phone Number:** 515-278-4262

On-Site Supervisor(s): N/A **E-Mail:** sujatha.gontu@gmail.com

Date(s) of Visit: 01-03-2025

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

LICENSING VISITS

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

Signed Application (470-0722) Received X **Yes** **No** **NA** **Date Signed:** 07-23-2024

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

Date Inspected: 03-11-2024

Comments : Clive Fire Marshal. For licensing regulations, these inspections are due every three years. The City of Clive typically do these inspections more frequently.

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*	*Summer Only*

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General	0	16	59	0	75
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 02-01-2025 to 02-01-2027
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Nate Knepper **Date:** 01-06-2025

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 1/3/25. The owner and the director were both present throughout this 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.

Happy Hearts Montessori Daycare and Preschool is a new program that was given permission to open on 9/5/24. This is a new program located in the old Montessori Children's Center in Clive. Sujatha Gontu is the owner of this program. Maria Mondragon is the director of this program. Maria was the on-site supervisor under the previous ownership and has taken a number of professional development training classes over the years and has many years of experience working in child care.

This program is open year-round and serves children ages two years of age through five years of age. The center uses a Montessori learning curriculum with children. There are three classrooms. The capacity of the two year old classroom is 16 children. The capacity of the three year old classroom is also 16 children. The four/five year old classroom has a capacity of 43 children.

During the visit, in the four/five year old and the three year old classroom, children were engaged in free-choice play at the different learning stations made available to them. Staff were interacting with children and assisting them with things as needed. Some children were doing art projects. Some children were playing with manipulative and dramatic play toys. In the two year old classroom, the staff member was initially reading a book to children.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

This is a center under new ownership.

Enrollment is slowly growing indicating a need in the community.

The owner and director are organized.

The center does a good jog working with Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R).

There are tenured staff at this center from the previous ownership.

The center continues to have a good partnership with the city of Clive (parks, library, fire department, etc.).

Monthly staff meetings are held.

The playground is fenced in, very large and spacious and also has a garden for growing their own vegetables.

Over the past year, new lighting has been installed, new blinds, and exterior painting has been done.

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

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.
From observation, the smaller, portable climbing structure/slide for the younger children should be moved so there are six foot fall zones on all slides and the slide on this structure is not lined up with the larger climbing structure/slides.

109.11(7)c: All centers: Annual inspection prior to heating season of all fuel-burning appliances to reduce risk of carbon monoxide poisoning and shall install one carbon monoxide detector on each floor that conforms to UL Standard 2034.
The carbon monoxide detector located in the four/five year old classroom was not functioning on the day of the visit.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Radon testing was completed 1/24/23 - 1/26/23. The radon levels came back below the 4.0 cutoff. All three classrooms should be tested moving forward. Because levels were below 4.0, the center can move to testing for radon at least every five years now. So long as radon levels remain below 4.0, they can remain on a five year plan. If at the next testing, levels in any classroom come back 4.0 or higher, the center will have to have a mitigation plan, retest, and at least temporarily move back to testing every two years.

The annual HVAC inspection was completed 10/2/24.

The center does not transport and they do not take field trips other than going to the park from time to time that is directly across the street from the center as well as visiting local businesses. The center also invites different agencies/businesses into the center from time to time for presentations.

I - Power and IQ4K were discussed at the visit. CCR&R can assist with the IQ4K application if the center is interested in the future. All staff (currently only the owner and the director are under the center) need to have I - Power profiles.

It is recommended labeled first-aid backpacks be used in classrooms rather than first-aid baskets.

It is recommended outdoor playground mats be purchased and placed under swings and at the bottom of slides to help preserve surfacing.

The staff tracking sheet was again emailed to the center. It is recommended staff files be organized directly per the staff tracking sheet.

The childhood illness posting was also emailed to the center after the visit concluded. If any health questions or issues come up in the future, the center should also utilize their nurse consultant.

It was noted the center is using the same handbooks as the previous ownership as no significant changes have been made other than a new owner and a new name. If the center changes information in the handbooks, these should also be sent to this consultant for review to make sure completed.

It is recommended the center continue to work with CCR&R.

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.