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

Name of Center: Growing Tree Preschool **Enrollment:** 46 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 22845

Street: 833 Ash ST **City:** Osage Iowa **Zip** 50461 **County:** Mitchell

Mailing Address: 833 Ash ST, Osage, IA, 50461

Director's Name: Katelyn Wittrock **Phone Number:** 641-732-5522

On-Site Supervisor(s): Becky Herrick **E-Mail:** Katelyn.Wittrock@osage.k12.ia.us

Date(s) of Visit: 10-23-2023

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

Date Inspected: 05-26-2021

Comments :

LICENSE TYPE: **Child Care** X **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: Infants (0-23 mo.) 2 Years X Preschool-Age School-Age

Get-Well Evening Care Special Needs

SCHEDULE: Year-round X School-Year Summer Only

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

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

QRS Rating: 1

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 12-01-2022 to 12-01-2024
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Raymond Salsbury **Date:** 10-23-2023

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

N/A

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

An unannounced annual visit was made to Growing Tree Preschool in Osage on 10-23-23 where I met with the center director and lead teacher Katelyn Wittrock, and assistant teacher Becky Herrick. Katelyn took over the lead teacher and director role at the start of the 2021 school year and is well qualified for the position with a BA in early education, and 8 years of previous experience. Becky has been with the program since August 2019 and previously has served as the assistant and lead in the past. The preschool is located in the outreach center in Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Osage. The program is operated as a non-profit program overseen by a board of directors. The four and five-year old children attend on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday afternoon from 12:00-2:50 pm. The three and four-year-old children have the choice of attending on Monday and Thursday or Tuesday and Friday morning from 8:30-11:00 am. The four-year-old preschool program partners with the Osage School District to provide the voluntary preschool program. There are a total of 46 children enrolled between the sessions but class sizes are limited to allow for low teacher to child ratios. All aspects subject to licensing standards were reviewed during the visit.

The general layout of the building and classroom remain the same as observed in prior visits. The program operates out of a single classroom. Windows along the exterior walls provide ample natural light, a view of the outdoors, and ventilation. There are two bathrooms directly accessible from the classroom, and additional sinks in the classroom. Secondary exits provide direct egress to the outdoors, as well as other areas of the building. All emergency exits were clear of obstruction and opened freely. The room was observed to be clean with no maintenance issues noted during the visit. The room is divided into activity centers through the placement of furniture, low shelving, and play structures so that there were no blind areas. Activity centers observed on the day of the visit include library, Lego/blocks, table toys, puzzles, transportation, art, dramatic play, listening, writing, math, science/discovery, sensory table, and music. Centers were arranged in a manner that allowed easy movement between activities, and room to play. A copy of the daily schedule and planned curriculum are posted. The curriculum theme on the day of my visit was related to the season of Fall, Halloween, and Pumpkins. Positive behavior management techniques were observed with the teachers recognizing appropriate behavior, redirecting negative behavior, and using routines to encourage positive behavior. During the visit the teachers were also observed to talk with children about their play and review likely outcomes and consequences of various behavioral choices to help the children with making better decisions. Both teachers were actively engaged with the children throughout the visit presenting the planned curriculum, and joining the children in their play when they engaged in self-directed choice activities.

Good health and safety practices were observed with the teachers having the children wash their hands upon entry, and ensuring that they washed their hands in an effective manner after using the restroom or other times they became soiled. A first aid kit was present and contained material necessary to address most common first aid needs. There were no children taking medications or with diagnosed allergies but the center does have policies in place if needed. Good cleaning practices were observed with the teachers waiting for the children to be out of the immediate area before using chemical cleaners. Chemical cleaners, personal items, and other items that could pose a safety risk to children were stored in areas where they were not accessible.

The center does not have a traditional playground space but does have options of a fenced area with some non-climbing toys, going for walks, or on other field trips. The outdoor toys were observed to be in good repair and appropriate to the

ages of the children present. The building and a large mature tree provide ample shade.

Due to the limited hours of operation meals are not prepared but snacks are provided. The parents take it in turn to provide snacks either providing items at the beginning of the school year or through the year as needed. Most items consist of single serving options. A refrigerator is available to maintain cold holding temperatures for items that need it. The center does maintain a limited supply of snack items to supplement what is provided by parents if needed. Good food storage and handling practices were generally observed. A copy of a menu of the served snacks is maintained.

In reviewing administrative records all required notices were present and posted in an area readily accessible to parents and visitors. In reviewing child and staff files a random selection of 15 child files from the various sessions. All files contained all required documentation with the exception of 2 that needed a current physical.. Both staff files were reviewed and Katelyn's file contained all required information. Becky needed an updated physical, and the results of the FBI Fringer print background check could not be located. In reviewing inspection logs and certificates all were available and current. Radon testing had been renewed but was slightly elevated with a tested level of 5.3 +/- 0.3 piCu/L which is just over the cutoff limit of 4.0 piCu/L. Katelyn stated that the board is looking at options including a mitigation system. The center handbook was previously reviewed and all required policies were present.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

This continues to be a very strong program with a focus on helping children build school readiness skills. This is due in large part to the stability of the staff with both Katelyn and Becky having been with the program of the past several years. The stability of the program has resulted in there being little change from the prior visit, and has created a positive reputation within the community. Katelyn identified that they have opened enrollment for next year and at this time they only have 5 slots left.

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

109.9(1)b: All files contain:A signed copy of DHS criminal history record check or any other permission form approved by the Department of public Safety for conducting an Iowa or national criminal history check. A copy of Request for Child Abuse Information.Copies of the results of Iowa records checks conducted.Copies of national criminal history check results.Any Department-issued documents sent to the center related to records check.
Number not in compliance: 1

109.10(1)a: Preschool (for children five years and younger not enrolled in school): Physical exam report submitted within 30 days of admission, was obtained no more than 12 months prior to admission, is signed by a licensed MD, DO, PA, Chiropractor or ARNP, and contains health history; present health status including allergies, medications, and acute/chronic conditions; and recommendations for continued care if necessary.
Number not in compliance: 2

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

A full license wiil remain in effect at this time. Please provide a written response to the licensing consultant identifying a plan of action to correct and maintain those aspects cited as not meeting licensing standards and identifying an anticipated date of compliance. At least one visit will be made to the center during the next year.

NOTE: The Licensed Capacity is changed to reflect the center program philosophy of increased attention and engagement in learning by capping class size to fewer children. While the capacity is limited to 20 children the physical facilities would accommodate 24 children should the program seek to increase the numbers served in the future.

*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.