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

Name of Center: College Community Early Childhood Center **Enrollment:** 200 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 50769

Street: 125 Prairie Hill CT SW **City:** Cedar Rapids Iowa **Zip** 52404 **County:** Linn

Mailing Address: 401 76th AVE SW, Cedar Rapids, IA, 52404

Director's Name: Kathleen Schulte **Phone Number:** 319-848-5296

On-Site Supervisor(s): Erin Hill **E-Mail:** kschulte@crprairie.org

Date(s) of Visit: 04-05-2023

X **Licensing Visit** X **Unannounced Visit** **Off Year Visit** X **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: 04-18-2022

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 X NAEYC NSACA 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	18	18	263	81	380
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 04-01-2023 to 04-01-2025
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons **Date:** 08-22-2023

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

Not applicable.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

College Community Early Childhood Center (CCECC) commenced operations in August, 2019. CCECC is located in a building which is part of the College Community School District. CCECC operates several sites (CCECC - Creek, CCECC - Crest, CCECC - Heights, CCECC - Hill, CCECC - Ridge, CCECC - View and CCEC - CVT) which are all part of the College Community School District. During the summer, some full days of emergency closing (example snow day), and some breaks (holiday and spring), this program has the ability to combine with other CCECC sites to provide full day child care. Specifically, CCECC provides early learning programming and childcare to children age infant through school-age. Current enrollment is 200.

Multi-site director Kathleen "Kathy" Schulte has a MA degree in early childhood elementary education. Ms. Schulte has over 25 years of experience working with children including during her work as a school principal and early childhood teacher. Assistant director/ CCECC on-site supervisor is Erin Hill. Ms. Hill has a MA degree in early childhood special education and over 10 years of experience working with children.

On 4/5/2023, program space was observed.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

CCECC operates multiple sites throughout the community that offer a variety of childcare and early learning programming opportunities to help meet the needs of children and families. CCECC is well-established and accepts a variety of funding sources.

CCECC has a history of participation in quality initiatives. Several CCECC sites have achieved NAEYC accreditation and are currently going through renewal.

CCECC has the following website for families and the community to access information about their programs: https://www.crprairie.org/.

According to the family handbook the mission of CCECC is "...Guided by high expectations, partnerships with our schools and families, and extensive knowledge of child development, Early Learning Staff provide a broad range of educational opportunities that enable students to enter Elementary School with the skills necessary to ensure quality learning today for tomorrow."

CCECC is non-profit and operates under a Board of Directors. Ownership and management of the program has remained consistent. The management team includes multi-site early childhood principal-director Ms. Schulte, assistant director Erin Hill, administrative assistant Jenna Langhurst, billing specialist Hillary Baustian, early childhood instructional coach Sara Kayser, CFO of educational services Angela Morrison, multi-site school-age coordinator Whitney Hinrichs, and site specific supervisor. Ms. Schulte and the entire CCECC management team are organized, and in turn, CCECC programs operate smoothly. Ms. Schulte and the seasoned CCECC management team have noteworthy systems of organization in place to

help ensure administrative items are complete as required and maintained in a secure manner. CCECC management team talked about being appreciative of the collaboration that is done among all CCECC sites that allows for a sharing of materials, curriculum, and ideas/planning.

Since the last monitoring visit, CCECC has retained as well as hired some new staff. Staff throughout the classrooms reported celebrating 23 years, 10 years, 4 years and 6 months employment with CCECC. Many staff have advanced degrees in education and early childhood development. Since 2009, CCECC has had an immense number of staff participate in the TEACH program. Ms. Schulte discussed how CCECC currently has 6 staff (with an additional 4 staff starting fall 2023) participating in the TEACH program. This is quite impressive! Each new staff is encouraged and given the opportunity to pursue a CDA at no training cost. Documentation indicates that CCECC employees often complete annual professional growth training that exceeds Iowa Code requirements. Ms. Schulte talked about how CCECC values education and understands the link between education and quality programming. The program has a professional orientation system for onboarding new staff and for continuous transfer of knowledge to seasoned staff. Management reported the professional orientation system continues to be reviewed and updated regularly. The program utilizes the Iowa Wages Program. Management acknowledged the hard work their highly qualified team of staff do each day and who continue to show their commitment to the children and families they serve. Management continues to display their appreciation through staff shout-outs, special food days (e.g. soup day, sub lunches, baked potato bar, morning donuts, chocolate, fully stocked ice cream), and classroom door decorating contests (e.g. Unique To "Bee" Amazing door!). CCECC has an established "Meet Our Staff" wall display. Management described their staff as "...an extension of a family..."

CCECC sites have emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. CCECC successfully navigated through the 2008 historic Linn County flood, 8/10/2020 Derecho Storm, January 2019 Polar Vortex, and 2019 pandemic.

CCECC continues efforts at optimal communication between the program/staff and families. The program has organized parent-staff/program information centers, offers regular program newsletters, utilizes technological communication resources (e.g. use of App), and supports family programming activities. Inclusive registration events are held. CCECC regularly conducts a family survey and continues to note much program satisfaction with positive family feedback. Licensing observed many notes of appreciation from families to staff expressing gratitude.

Building and grounds are well-maintained. Paint is fresh and rooms (including storage areas) are organized. Management discussed the strategic efforts put forth to help ensure a continuous quality environment is provided. CCECC has their own, personal, small custodial team that clearly take pride in the pristine condition of the facility. During the monitoring visit, licensing observed custodial staff to be highly vested in the maintenance of the building including receptacle emptying, replenishing hand washing/toileting materials, and cleaning/disinfecting. It's also quite evident staff take great pride in the condition of the building and their specific classrooms as evidenced by exceptional classroom snack organization systems (particularly noted in room #301), the aesthetically pleasing matching staff-handmade shelf coverings (most noted in room 304) and fresh labeling of child items/areas (most observed in room #207). CCECC also has a collaborative partnership with the school district. CCECC has additional access to school administrative staff, school nurse, and kitchen personnel help ensure the building and grounds are safe, sanitary, and hazard free each day. There is an AED on-site. The program has access to their own spacious on-site storage shed. There is an on-site holding kitchen with meals prepared at a neighboring school and then transported to the CCECC.

Upon entering the center, an electronic board displays CCECC information including important dates to remember with upcoming events. Spacious center hallways have been transformed into inviting areas (e.g. natural light, soft seating, work seating, issues of NAEYC "Young Children" professional journal, a program-family-child lending library) for small enrichment activities to take place, for staff to relax on break, for staff to engage in classroom planning, for one to one staff/child work to occur, and for families to stop and play/learn at drop-off and pick-up. Since the last review, the program's lending library with hand-custom-crafted book return has expanded to include more book/literacy options.

Child areas continue to be arranged in a thoughtful manner keeping learning at the forefront. Children's artwork (e.g. Unique bunny and butterfly handprint/milestone work, journal exercise project, shadow building drawing) is nicely displayed in various areas of the program space. Curriculum is designed to help children become lifelong learners. Curriculum is a combination of learning strategies including Iowa Early Learning Standards, Creative Curriculum (e.g. gold, cloud), Everyday Math Enrichment, Second Step, Jolly Phonics, Heggerty Phonics Awareness, Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports, SPARK after-school, Mind Works and homework assistance. Curriculum also incorporates off-site field trip experiences (e.g. Super Skate, bowling, local parks, Macaroni KID, Bloomsbury Farm, Children's Museum) on-site guest speaker events (e.g. local storyteller, Ely library, Kona Ice, Peppy's Ice Cream, Music on the Move), themed days (e.g. water play), optional enrichments experiences (e.g. Daytime Dancers, Little Sports, running club) seasonal parties, and age defined outdoor play spaces. Communication between children and staff is done verbally, with picture cues, and through sign language.

CCECC sites collaborate well with many community partners including local businesses, health professionals, early access professionals, head start, other local school districts, various non-profit organizations, ECI, and CCR&R. In fall 2022,

CCECC received a grant to expand and opened a new unique community-based preschool with childcare opportunity. The program also applied for and received a grant allowing for the expansion (e.g. additional classrooms, adult restroom) of this CCECC main early learning center which will be completed in spring 2023. Management discussed being proud of their continued expansion efforts to help meet the needs of the community and their waiting lists.

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, diapering, cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing. Cleaning checklists and reminders are posted in various areas.

On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were observed to be nurturing and attentive to the children's needs. Areas of study in the center included insects, "Spring is in the Air" and "Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle". Week of the Young Child events were happening which included children and staff being encouraged to wear their favorite hat. Children had access to an array of materials (e.g. games, books, sensory items, imaginative play options, building materials, crafts) that encouraged innovative play. Activities offered and observed were many (e.g. infant cares, nap/quiet rest, music with movement, book reading, center play experiences, sensory events, small group work, group discussions). Room #302 had an inspiring camping center which included a pop-up camper experience with clever nature backdrop scene. Children in room #303 were observed to be laughing and excitedly chatting while filling shopping carts with groceries (from recycled food containers) as well as creating stories through the use of several oversized boxes (e.g. a get clean bathtub, building a baby crib). Staff provided a companionable presence allowing children to have many choices in their play experiences. Routine transitions (e.g. clean-up, lunch/food service rituals) worked smoothly into the program's welcoming and cooperative play environment. Staff were overheard providing children with many words of encouragement and utilizing PBIS teachings (e.g. how are you feeling chart in room #207). 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:

Ensure all diapering surfaces are non-porous.

Please ensure 3-sink dish washing procedures are posted at any sink dishes are washed by hand.

Repair the loose hinges on the diaper stations in room #201 and #202).

An updated floor plan noting the expansion project has been received and reviewed. Please forward an updated fire marshal certificate noting the additional space complies with fire code as well as a note to licensing when the project has reached completion.

A full license is issued. Thank you for the visit.

This report is to note an administrative change. Licensing received and reviewed an updated floor plan and approved fire marshal certificate. Due to the expansion project, total capacity has increased to 380.

*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.