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

Name of Center: Grace Preschool **Enrollment:** 45 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 26611

Street: 3700 Cottage Grove AVE **City:** Des Moines Iowa **Zip** 50311 **County:** Polk

Mailing Address: 3700 Cottage Grove AVE, Des Moines, IA, 50311

Director's Name: Ashley Wissler and Kelly Donnelly **Phone Number:** 515-279-5942

On-Site Supervisor(s): Janet Reynolds, Rachel Wilke-Shapiro, Julie Sahlin **E-Mail:** CoreenWitke@gracedesmoines.org ashleywissler@gracedesmoines.org

Date(s) of Visit: 02-02-2024

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

LICENSING VISITS

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

Signed Application (470-0722) Received X **Yes** **No** **NA** **Date Signed:** 02-01-2023

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

Date Inspected: 04-21-2023

Comments : Des Moines Fire Marshal.

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: 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	0	12	52	15	79
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 03-01-2023 to 03-01-2025
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Nate Knepper **Date:** 02-05-2024

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

N/A.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

An off-year visit was conducted on 2/2/24. The director was present throughout the visit and the assistant director for a portion of the 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. The most recent COVID updates were also reviewed.

Grace Preschool is located primarily in a lower level wing of the Grace United Methodist Church. There are four classrooms. The center serves children two years in age to roughly eight years in age (there is a school-age summer school component) using the Creative Learning Curriculum. The center is open year-round. Children typically can attend the center up until they are starting third grade. Some children attend full-day programming and some children attend part-day programming. Universal Preschool is also incorporated at the center.

The center is overseen by a church Board. The director of this center as of 5/2022 is Ashley Wissler. Ashley was previously an on-site supervisor. Ashley also has a BA degree in Early Childhood Education. Kelly Donnelly is the assistant director. Kelly was previously the director. There are three on-site supervisors - Janet Reynolds, Rachel Wilke-Shapiro, and Julie Sahlin. All individuals meet the qualifications for their positions.

During the visit, children were observed in their classrooms and on the lower level. In the classrooms, children were engaged in free-choice play at the different learning stations made available to them. In the lower level, children were engaged in large motor activities. Staff were involved with children and all of their activities.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The center participates in QPPS. In addition, all staff are also involved with NAEYC and other local, state, and/or national organizations (AEA, T.E.A.C.H. Program, Wages Program, etc.).

The center is currently working on IQ4K which is a voluntary program based on best practice.

Staff are required to get more than the DHS minimum requirements for annual professional training.

There is a parent advisory committee. Parents are strongly encouraged to participate in center events/activities. Communication with parents is stressed in the form of weekly and monthly newsletters specific to each classroom as well as center-wide newsletters. The center has a website as well as a Facebook page. The center also uses Pro-Care to communicate with families. Finally, two parent-teacher conferences are held each year.

Quarterly staff meetings are held. Staff also communicate through the app, Connect Team.

There is an additional cleaning service crew that clean the center classrooms five days a week.

There is a portfolio and picture display outside of each classroom detailing recent activities.

Staff pictures and bios are posted outside classrooms.

The center participates in the food program (CACFP) and has a full-time cook.

The center serves a diverse population.

The center has access to an indoor gym area when weather does not permit outdoor play.

The center as well as families/children have access to a mental health office as well as a medical clinic that is located within the church.

There are a lot of tenured staff who work at this program. The director acknowledges good work through verbal praise, gift cards, etc. Staff may also be eligible for sick leave, raises, etc. The director has her staff do extra incentive/training pieces such as taking the "Strength Finder Quiz" and things of that nature.

Good child-staff interactions were observed. Staff stated they try to work together as a team and bounce ideas off of each other.

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

109.9(2): All files are updated at least annually and when a change occurs.
One child file needs an annual update.

109.10(3)c: For ongoing, long term medications, authorization shall be obtained for a period not to exceed the duration of prescription.
There were two inhaler medications that were expired.

109.10(11): Smoking and use of tobacco products shall be prohibited in the center and every vehicle used to transport children. Prohibited in outdoor play area during hours of operation. Nonsmoking signs shall be posted at every entrance and in every vehicle used to transport. Signs shall include: Telephone number for reporting complaints. Internet address to DPH.
A No Smoking sign was not posted at or near the main entrance.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Radon testing was last completed at the end of January 2024. The center is awaiting results. If levels are below 4.0, the center can move to testing for radon at least every five years. So long as radon levels remain below 4.0, they can remain on a five year plan. If radon 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 HVAC system was last inspected 12/8/23.

Most of the field trips are within walking distance and/or they promote parents transporting their own children. The center does have a bus that is used sparingly at other times for field trips.

IQ4K and I-Power were discussed at the visit.

A Mandatory Reporter posting was emailed to the center after the visit concluded.

The new monthly playground inspection form was emailed to the center after the visit concluded.

It is recommended that outdoor mats be purchased to place under the swings and at the bottom of slides. This will better preserve the wood chip surfacing requirements.

*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.