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

Name of Center: St John School **Enrollment:** 84 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 19198

Street: 314 3rd St NE **City:** Independence Iowa **Zip** 50644 **County:** Buchanan

Mailing Address: 314 3rd St NE, Independence, IA, 50644

Director's Name: Kenedy Armell **Phone Number:** 319-334-7173

On-Site Supervisor(s): Kenedy Armell **E-Mail:** armellk@sjs.pvt.k12.ia.us

Date(s) of Visit: 04-01-2025

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

Date Inspected: 03-19-2024

Comments : Compliance on 04/02/24. The gym and cafeteria were approved as program space on 08/29/24.

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.) 2 Years X Preschool-Age X School-Age

Get-Well Evening Care Special Needs

SCHEDULE: Year-round X School-Year Summer Only

HOURS:	*Year-round*	*School-Year*	*Summer Only*
Sunday			
Monday		7:00 AM to 6:00 PM	
Tuesday		7:00 AM to 6:00 PM	
Wednesday		7:00 AM to 6:00 PM	
Thursday		7:00 AM to 6:00 PM	
Friday		7:00 AM to 6:00 PM	
Saturday			

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Age	Capacity
General			23	25	48
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 05-01-2024 to 05-01-2026
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Becky Frost **Date:** 04-03-2025

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

N/A

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

On 04/01/25 I made an unannounced off year licensing visit to St. John School in Independence. I met with Kenedy Armell, the director. Ms. Armell started with the program in November 2022 and became the director in August 2024. Ms. Armell is the director over both the preschool and childcare programs. Ms. Armell is using the TEACH program to get her BA in early childhood. Chenandoah Beason started in August 2023 and is with the children in the afternoon. Linda Hosch is the lead teacher of the three-year-old preschool. Rita Williamson is the former director and Ms. Hosch's assistant. Ms. Williamson has a BA in elementary education and started back with the program in January 2020. She was an on-site supervisor for the program during the 2017-2018 school year. She also has previous experience as an in-home childcare provider. The program employs eight staff members and has one sub. Dewey Hupke is the new principal this year.

The program is in St. John Catholic School. The three-year-old preschool class meets Monday through Thursday from 8:00 -11:00 am. The program also offers a childcare program that operates from 7:00 am until 6:00 pm. The program is only open during the schoolyear. The childcare program cares for three-year-old through school-aged children. There are currently 84 children enrolled. The four-year-old preschool program became exempt from DHS licensing in February 2019. It is part of the voluntary statewide preschool program and is regulated under the Department of Education.

The program operates out of two classrooms, the gym and the cafeteria. An inspection of each space was completed. Artificial lighting is used. The rooms are decorated with posters to assist the children with the learning process, such as the alphabet, colors, shapes, and numbers. The children's birthdays were posted. There is an area for circle time in the preschool room.

The centers observed on the day of the licensing visit include library, Legos/blocks, table toys, listening, games, puzzles, transportation, art, sensory table, dramatic play, writing, math, science, puppets, Play-Doh, and music. Centers were arranged in a manner that allowed easy movement between activities, but it also allowed for clear supervision by staff members. Materials were in good condition. The materials are located at child level, so they were easily accessible to the children.

There were purses in each room that are within reach of children. All personal items must be stored so that children do not have access to them.

There is a bathroom in the preschool room that has four toilets and two sinks. Handwashing procedures were posted. There are two sinks in the childcare room and handwashing procedures were posted. Cots are used to nap in the childcare room.

The preschool and childcare class use a variety of resources to develop lesson plans. Lesson plans are developed around weekly themes. Lesson plans were available for review in the preschool and childcare rooms. There is a smart board in each room to help with educational activities.

There was a phone in each room with a posting that included emergency numbers and the program's address and phone number. Emergency fire and tornado procedures and evacuation diagrams were posted by the main program doors and outdoor exits in the childcare room and preschool room. Post the evacuation diagrams by both exits out of the gym and the cafeteria. A daily schedule was posted in both rooms.

I reviewed documentation of monthly fire and tornado drills. I reviewed documentation of monthly playground inspections. A radon test was completed in March 2024. Results were within EPA guidelines. The annual fuel burning inspection was completed and no concerns were noted. A carbon monoxide detector was on site in the boiler room. Outlets were protected. The fire marshal inspection occurred on 03/19/24, with compliance on 04/02/24. The gym and cafeteria were inspected on 08/29/24 and have been approved as program space.

The school-age children are released from childcare to eat breakfast in the cafeteria. The childcare children receive breakfast, a morning snack, lunch and an afternoon snack. The children in childcare have a choice of purchasing breakfast and lunch through the school. The children can bring a cold lunch. Preschool children eat everything in the childcare room. Lunch trays are returned to the cafeteria to be washed. Breakfast, lunch and snack menus were posted for the childcare program. If the school-age latchkey children want a snack they bring it from home.

The preschool program has a morning snack that is provided by parents. The preschool is not documenting the snack. You must document both components served and have the information available for review during licensing visits. Disposable products are used in the preschool room so dishwashing is not necessary.

There is a refrigerator in each room and thermometers were present. Food items were stored according to NHSPS guidelines.

The center uses Nemesis Cleaner and Disinfectant to sanitize the food tables. The program is cleaning the tables with soap and water first and follow the sanitizer with a portable water rinse. The dwell time for this product is three minutes. The tables must be cleaned and sanitized both before a food activity and after. The preschool class is only doing this prior to their snack.

The parent information is posted in each room. The mandatory reporter, childcare consultant and the handbook availability were posted. The license was conspicuously hung. A no-smoking sign was posted at the entrance.

The children were finishing snack during my time in the preschool room. Staff members assisted with handwashing and then the children moved to the rug where they watched videos on the smart board about farm animals. The video included counting, letter sounds and animal sounds. Staff members were flexible and patient. They used positive redirection when necessary. The children worked on using scissors and the teachers assisted them. Staff members provided the children with praise. They actively danced with the children and offered choices. The children appeared to enjoy their time in the program.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

Ms. Armell states their enrollment is increasing. Families want, need and are interested in the service they provide.

Ms. Armell states they have improved their communication skills with parents have improved. The use the Brightwheel app and the Remind app for direct messaging.

Ms. Armell states they are considering offering summer care for next summer. They are taking surveys to see what the interest level is.

Ms. Armell states they started a childcare committee/board. She states they have a lot of involved parents who want to see the program work. The school board backs the decisions made by the committee and they all work to come up with solutions.

Ms. Armell works closely with Lisa Wood from Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R).

The childcare and preschool rooms have smart boards and the children love them.

The program incorporates Christian teachings and prayers into their day.

The program has a website for families and the community. The three-year-old preschool program has a private social media page for enrolled families.

The preschool program has seventh grade friends visit the classroom. They typically do organized games are crafts with the preschool children.

The programs can use the playground and the gym for large motor activities.

The childcare program meets a need for parents and it is nice that parents do not have to worry about transportation before and after school.

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

109.8(2): Ratio maintained in center as required by age.
Due to the program being out of ratio several times last school year I reviewed enrollment information in the Brightwheel app. The childcare program is routinely out of ratio after school for a second year in a row. It appears they are out of ratio from approximately 3:15 pm until the high school staff members arrive between 3:30-3:45 pm. This is unacceptable. The program cannot be out of ratio. You need to staff the program for the number of children present at any given time. If you do not have enough staff members you must send children home.

109.15(2): Center shall follow minimum CACFP menu patterns for meals and snacks.Menus planned one week in advance, made available to parents, and kept on file with substitutions noted.Avoid foods with high incident rate of causing choking. The preschool room must document the snacks that are served on a calendar and have this information available for review during licensing visits. Additionally the snack tables must be cleaned and sanitized both before and after snack in the preschool room.

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.

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I will not be placing the program on a provisional license this year because the school has a new principal and I am giving the school the opportunity to correct the situation. If the program is out of ratio next year at any time they will be placed on a provisional license. I will be checking the attendance information.

Additionally, currently the school is using the childcare/preschool Brightwheel app for billing. The Brightwheel app must only be used for the licensed program. The school should be using a separate account.

*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.