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

Name of Center: College Community ECC-Prairie Heights **Enrollment:** 56 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 25035

Street: 190 76th AVE SW **City:** Cedar Rapids Iowa **Zip** 52404 **County:** Linn

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

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

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

Date(s) of Visit: 03-26-2025

Licensing Visit X **Unannounced Visit** X **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: 02-26-2025

Comments :

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 X NAEYC NSACA Other NA

Program Serves: Infants (0-23 mo.) 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			24	186	210
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 04-01-2024 to 04-01-2026
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons **Date:** 05-02-2025

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) has been in operation for many years and operates several program throughout the College Community School District. Specifically, CCECC - Prairie Heights is located inside Prairie Heights Elementary School. The CCECC - Prairie Heights license includes childcare for school-age children (primarily located in the school cafeteria) outside of school hours and childcare for preschool-age children (primarily located in classroom #210, full days Monday and T-F afternoon) outside of the statewide voluntary 4-year-old preschool hours. During the summer, some full days of emergency closing, and some breaks, this program has the ability to combine with other CCECC sites to provide full day child care. Current enrollment is 56.

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. Multi-site school-age coordinator is Whitney Hinrichs. Ms. Hinrichs has several years experience working with children and continues to participate in much child development related training. Candidate for specific site supervisor is Calese Clemons.

On 3/26/2025, 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 and maintain NAEYC accreditation. The College Community School District is one of only eight school districts across the country recognized as a 2022 Fall “Lighthouse System” by AASA, The School Superintendents Association. College Community was recognized in the area of: Redesign for Early Learning. College Community Schools received special recognition for Strength in Early Learning Partnerships in Service for Highly Diverse Community.

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 seasoned management team includes multi site early childhood principal-director Ms. Schulte, assistant director Erin Hill, administrative assistant Jenna Langhurst, 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 entire CCECC management team have extremely noteworthy systems of organization in place to help ensure administrative items are completed and securely maintained as required. There is a collaboration among all CCECC sites to share materials, curriculum, joys, challenges, and ideas/planning.

Since the last monitoring visit, CCECC has retained as well as hired some new staff. CCECC has 12 staff currently participating in TEACH and Wages. Many staff have or are working towards CDAs and/or advanced degrees in early childhood development. Documentation indicates that employees often complete annual professional growth training that exceeds Iowa Code requirements. CCECC has continuously updated onboarding procedures and orientation for new staff, annual professional development for all staff and increased transfer of knowledge opportunities. CCECC continues to understand and advocate for the link between education and quality programming. Management discussed how bonuses, vacation/sick buy-back opportunities, health/wellness benefits, and uniquely created warm areas for daily staff breaks/lunch are all part of the program's operations to support, acknowledge, reward and celebrate the hard work staff do. Management also continues to display their appreciation through staff shout-outs, special food days and classroom door decorating contests.

CCECC - Prairie Heights 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 (e.g. registration events, conferences). Parents are invited to be part of various program-sponsored committees. CCECC regularly conducts a family survey and continues to note much program satisfaction with positive family feedback.

CCECC - Prairie Heights has a collaborative partnership with the school district. The school building and grounds are maintained. School custodial staff, school administration, school nurse, and school food service personnel help ensure the children's space is sanitary and hazard free each day. Each CCECC location implemented custodial cleaning checklists. The school kitchen is inspected at least annually by the health department. There is an AED on-site. The program has regular access to additional areas within the school including the school gymnasium for large gross motor activities. CCECC management presents an annual report to the school board noting accomplishments.

Child areas continue to be arranged in a thoughtful manner keeping learning at the forefront. CCECC curriculum is designed to help children become lifelong learners. Curriculum is a combination of developmentally appropriate 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, Bloomsbury Farm, Children's Museum) on-site guest speaker events (e.g. storyteller, 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, lending book library, Book Fairs), seasonal parties (e.g. Winterfest) and age defined outdoor play spaces. Communication between children and staff is done verbally, with picture cues, and through sign language. CCECC 2025 summer programming and school-year 2025-2026 enrollment are well underway with established waiting lists. Management discussed continued future goals related to curriculum improvements (e.g. physical activity, whole room of study approach) and outdoor space.

CCECC programs have emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. CCECC programs have successfully navigated through the 2008 Linn County Flood, 2019 winter Polar Vortex, 2019 health (covid-19) pandemic, 8/10/20 Derecho Storm, 2021 food supply issues, 2022 infant formula shortages, 2023 air quality alerts and 7/19/24 global technology outage.

CCECC sites collaborate well with many community partners including local businesses, health professionals, early access professionals, TIES, head start, other local school districts, various non-profit organizations, ECI, and CCR&R. CCECC applies for and receives grants (e.g. expansion 2022, expansion 2023). Management discussed being proud of their continued expansion efforts to help meet the needs of the community and their waiting lists as well as their continued innovation to be able to always do what's best for kids.

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. Area of study included "Buildings". School-age and preschool-age children have access to an array of materials (e.g. games, books, sensory items, imaginative play options, building materials, crafts) that encouraged innovative play. Activities offered were many (e.g. small group music with movement, crafting). One child was overheard discussing his masterpiece stating he was

"...drawing mom because she's an angel..." Staff provided a companionable presence allowing children to have many choices in their play experiences. Routine transitions (e.g. cleanup, program/school transition, face-to-name/attendance, food service rituals) worked smoothly into the program's welcoming and cooperative play environment. Staff were overheard engaging children in meaningful discussion, utilizing PBIS teachings and encouraging social graces. 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:

Please forward OSS candidate Calese Clemons's on-site supervisor qualifications (e.g. scan/email, ipower profile) to licensing for review.

Please consider adding an enclosed restroom into the childcare classroom. This will help decrease child behaviors related to sitting and waiting in the school hallway as well as help with challenges related to staff-child ratio and careful supervision in the school-age shared restroom space.

Since the last review, all meals are now occurring in the school cafeteria including meals served to preschool-age children. School cafeteria considerations for preschool-age children shall include preschool-age children having increased designated time for their age-group to eat without distractions of school-age groups as well as increased time to consume food. Also, please note - children at the center two hours or longer shall be offered food at intervals of not less than two hours or more than three hours apart unless the child is asleep [Rule 109.13(1)].

The preschool playground has a large divot or hole in the ground where children run and play. Remedy.

Continue to collaborate with the school district regarding maintenance of the outdoor playground (e.g. adequate cushion surface depth, chipping/rusting equipment, power washing of outdoor equipment). If areas of the outdoor playground become unsatisfactory, the childcare shall refrain from accessing those areas until remedies are made.

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

*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.