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

Name of Center: KCE Champions LLC @ Wright Elementary School **Enrollment:** 35 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 51889

Street: 1524 Hollywood BLVD NE **City:** Cedar Rapids Iowa **Zip** 52402 **County:** Linn

Mailing Address: PO Box 171, Palo, IA, 52324

Director's Name: Bethany "Bree" Hogue **Phone Number:** 319-432-3608

On-Site Supervisor(s): Taylor Griffith **E-Mail:** Bree.Hogue@discoverchampions.com SSous@discoverchampions.com knorrick@discoverchampions.com

Date(s) of Visit: 01-03-2025

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

Date Inspected: 02-17-2022

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: X Accredited NAEYC NSACA Other NA

Program Serves: Infants (0-23 mo.) 2 Years 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				60	60
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 12-01-2024 to 12-01-2026
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons **Date:** 01-07-2025

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

Not applicable.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

In 2022, KCE Champions LLC opened several licensed childcare programs in Linn County. Specifically, KCE Champions LLC @ Wright Elementary School is located inside Wright Elementary School which is part of the Cedar Rapids Community School District. The program primarily operates Monday through Friday before and after school hours 6:30am to 6:00pm. KCE Champions does have the ability to extend hours on scheduled early release days, emergency late start days, and emergency early-out days. During the summer, full days of emergency closing (example snow day), and some breaks (holiday and spring), this site has the ability to operate full days and/or combine for full days of care at another KCE Champions LLC location. KCE Champions LLC @ Johnson Steam Academy serves only school-age children. Current enrollment is 35.

Multi-site regional manager Setara Sous has a BA in criminology, has 6 years experience working within this childcare corporation, participates in child development related training and been director qualified since January 2024. Multi-site director Bethany "Bree" Hogue has been with the program since operations commenced in 2022. Ms. Hogue is completing an AA degree in early childhood education, has several years of experience working in children, and continues to participate in much child development related training. On-site supervisor (OSS) Taylor Griffith has been in the role since December 2024. Ms. Griffith has experience working with children and continues to participate in much child development training.

On 1/3/2025, program space was observed.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

KCE Champions LLC @ Wright Elementary School is located inside an elementary school in a predominantly urban neighborhood. The profit program provides a variety of early learning and childcare opportunities as well as accepts many different of funding sources to help meet the needs of children and families throughout the community.

KCE Champions LLC @ Wright Elementary School has established the following website for families and the community to learn more about the program: https://www.discoverchampions.com/.

According to the family and employee handbook, the philosophy of KCE Champions LCC is that "...learning is meant to be a natural, joyful experience. Our goal is to help your child develop socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually. Children thrive when the process of discovery is lovingly encouraged and gently reinforced..." KCE Champions LCC is a division of KinderCare Education. The history of how KCE Champions LLC came to fruition and evolved to present day (including 1969 KinderCare Learning Centers founded, 1998 corporate headquarters moved from Montgomery Alabama to present-day Portland Oregon, 2003 KCE Champions LLC joins KinderCare Education, 2013 KinderCare launches its Early Foundations proprietary curriculum) is impressive. KinderCare Education serves more than 186,000 children in 40 states, and Champions specifically serves more than 40,000 of those children in 21 states and Washington, D.C. Champions partners with principals, teachers, and parents to create more than 600 before- and after-school and year-round learning environments.

In 2021, KinderCare Education earned a fifth Gallup Exceptional Workplace Award - one of only four companies worldwide to receive this aware five years in a row. Champions has made a continuous commitment to earn and re-earn Corporate Accreditation from Cognia a global leader in advancing excellence in education through accreditation.

Management (e.g. regional manager Setara Sous, multi-site director Ms. Hogue, OSS Ms. Griffith) has systems of organization in place to help ensure administrative items are completed and maintained as required. Management is knowledgeable of licensing guidelines as well as their own policies and procedures. Management has reported holding regular staff meetings to review rules, policies and procedures. During the 2025 annual visit, OSS Ms. Griffith was not present. It was noted, OSS Thomas "Tom" Reinier of the KCE Champions LLC @ Grant Wood location was substituting on this day of winter break as sites were combined.

KCE Champions LLC has established and is working to maintain optimal communication between the program/staff and families. The program has a parent-staff/program information center, utilizes technological communication resources, and supports family programming activities. Prior to each school-year commencing, KCE Champions LLC sponsors a "Champions Family Night" at a local park with food and various activities including face painting to welcome new and returning families to the upcoming school-year. Summer camp enrollment begins in early January each year.

KCE Champions LCC school-age curriculum focuses on six content areas that research shows enhance school-age children's growth and development as well as help build the essential skills needed to be successful in elementary school and beyond: Character Development, Community, Creative Expression, Executive Function, Inquiry-Based Learning, and Literacy. The program provides child interest areas in creative arts, literacy, math and construction, puzzles and games, and science. Daily fitness, healthy eating, and homework assistance (as needed) are part of the program's operations. There are additional opportunities offered for enrichment clubs and Junior Counselor leadership roles for older school-age students. Summer/extended breaks curriculum is also enhanced with guest speaker events and off-site field trips. KCE Champions LLC @ Wright Elementary School has daily access to the school cafeteria.

KCE Champions collaborates well with many community partners including the Cedar Rapids Community School District, local businesses, CCR&R, and health professionals. 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. The school food service personnel prepare and provide all food items for the childcare program. The school kitchen is inspected at least annually by the health department. There is an AED onsite.

Each KCE Champions LLC location has emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. The program has successfully navigated through 2022 food supply and infant formula shortages, 2023 air quality alerts and 7/19/24 global technology outage.

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, cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting.

On the day of the monitoring visit, licensing observed staff greeting families and children arriving for the childcare day. Area of study for the winter break were noted to be "Bridge Building Basics". Activities observed included full-day winter break programming with self-selected play experiences (e.g. supplies from home play, k'nex, imaginative play items, wax sticks). Routine transitions (e.g. clean-up, restroom breaks, face-to-name checks) were observed. Children appeared comfortable with staff.

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.
- Child file reviewed (KR) lacked documentation of all required paperwork except an IDPH Certificate of Immunization.

109.10(3)a: All medications shall be stored in original containers with physician or pharmacist directions. Labels should be intact and stored so they are inaccessible to children and public. Nonprescription medications shall be labeled with the child's name.
- An inhaler was observed in the first-aid bag with no label-name-prescription attached. Staff reported it belonged to child KR and are in the process of obtaining further documentation.

109.9(2)g Child health
- The day this monitoring visit occurred was during winter break which was a full-day of childcare. It was noted that this location contained children and staff combined from other Champions locations. During morning snack routines, one child was observed to ask for a milk substitution to which staff replied there wasn't one. When licensing asked staff why there wasn't a milk substitute for this child, staff reported the child was not regularly enrolled at the KCE Champions LLC @ Wright location and they just became aware of the milk intolerance issues. The child received a snack consisting of only

one food component.

109.12(1) Activities. The center shall have a written curriculum or program structure that uses developmentally appropriate practices and a written program of activities planned according to the developmental level of the children. The center shall post a schedule of the program in a visible place. The child care program shall complement but not duplicate the school curriculum. The program shall be designed to provide children with: a. A curriculum or program of activities that promotes self-esteem and positive self-image; social interaction; self-expression and communication skills; creative expression; and problem-solving skills. b. A balance of active and quiet activities; individual and group activities; indoor and outdoor activities; and staff-initiated and child-initiated activities. c. Activities which promote both gross and fine motor development. d. Experiences in harmony with the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of the children. e. A supervised nap or quiet time for all children under the age of six not enrolled in school who are present at the center for five or more hours.
- Child materials were observed to be stored in a discombobulated manner (e.g. broken, incomplete, disorganized) making activities difficult and/or unable to be enjoyed. Several children were observed asking staff for basic crafting supplies (e.g. markers, colors). After looking at the program furnishings, licensing found some crayons stored in bins with game pieces, various cards from different card games, building materials, etc. When licensing asked about this, staff reported the children weren't and aren't taking care of the materials so many items aren't where they should be or have been put in the office area. One staff further indicated there were no glue sticks out because the children had been trying to make slime out of the glue.
- Open food grazing is not good curriculum. One student arrived with a large bag of Doritos and was allowed to eat while walking around and playing. One student arrived with a donut as well as a large Stanley cup and allowed to eat while walking around and playing. One student arrived with a mini backpack and allowed to eat mini foods out of while playing. One child arrived with a Pez dispenser and allowed to eat as well as refill several times while walking around and playing. There was no designated clean and sanitized food table encouraged for children who arrived with food in-hand. Inadequate hand washing practices for children arriving with food was observed.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Please ensure an updated menu is posted including all foods served on full-days of childcare (e.g. winter break, spring break, breakfast, lunch, snack).

Please ensure there are cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting supplies on-site and that each is properly labeled (e.g. name of product, manufacturer use instructions).

Please ensure posted lesson/curriculum plan have the current week's dates rather than just a week with number(s). To have otherwise, makes it difficult to know if the posted lesson/curriculum plan is current.

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.

It is beneficial to note, Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) and the nurse consultant are excellent resources to access training opportunities and support in the area.

The program's license remains in full status. 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.