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

Name of Center: Little Learners Inc **Enrollment:** 50 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 24522

Street: 950 Robins Square Dr **City:** Robins Iowa **Zip** 52328 **County:** Linn

Mailing Address: 950 Robins Square Dr, Robins, IA, 52328

Director's Name: Terri Martin **Phone Number:** 319-378-3921

On-Site Supervisor(s): Lindsay Bascom **E-Mail:** tmartin@fmtcs.com

Date(s) of Visit: 09-20-2023

X **Licensing Visit** X **Unannounced Visit** **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: 10-25-2023

Comments : On 10/28/2023, Ms. Martin noted items have been and/or are in the process of being resolved.

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 NAEYC NSACA Other X 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	16	22	15	22	75
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 10-01-2023 to 10-01-2025
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons **Date:** 10-20-2023

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

Not applicable.

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

Little Learners Inc is a non-denominational Christian program that has been in operation since 1988. Continued growth led Little Learners Inc to build and relocate in 1998 to the property in which they operate today. The program offers a variety of learning experiences (including full-time childcare, part-time childcare, preschool programming, and summer camps) to help meet the needs of families and children in the community. Little Learners Inc serves children age infant through school-age. Current enrollment is 50.

The program's original owner/director is Terri Martin. Ms. Martin has been the sole owner and director of this program since it first opened over 35 years ago. Ms. Martin has completed college courses in nursing and general education. Ms. Martin has many years of experience working with children and continues to participate in much child development related training. On-site supervisor is Ms. Bascom. Ms. Bascom has been the on-site supervisor since August 2021. Ms. Bascom has a BA degree, several years working with children, training in positive supports, and continues to participate in much child development related training.

On 9/20/2023, program space was observed.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

Little Learners Inc is a well established program offering many different early learning opportunities to help meet the needs of families and children throughout the community. The program is located in a residential neighborhood of a predominantly urban community.

Little Learners Inc has been in operation since 1988 and is currently celebrating their 35th year being in business providing quality childcare and early learning experiences to children throughout the community.

Little Learners Inc has the following website for persons to gain knowledge about the program: http://littlelearnersia.weebly.com/.

The goal of Little Learners Inc "...has been and continues to be modeling Christian character and values before the children, as well as complimenting the training you are providing in the home. We want to provide a homelike environment where the children feel safe and secure along with an academic environment where the children feel free to explore and learn..."

Ms. Martin is an entrepreneur invested in the surrounding community. Ms. Martin remains the original owner and director of Little Learners Inc. Management (e.g. Ms. Martin, Ms. Bascom) of this childcare has remained consistent. The management team is organized and has noteworthy systems of organization in place to help ensure administrative items are completed as required and maintained in a secure manner. As a result, the program experiences smooth daily operations. Management is knowledgeable of licensing guidelines as well as their own program's policies and procedures. Since the last monitoring visit, the program has retained seasoned employees experiencing no turnover. Ms. Martin talked about having a great group of employees, some of which are college students, who return during breaks and summer. Staff throughout the

program rooms reported celebrating 18 years and 5 years of employment with Little Learners! Congratulations on staff longevity!

Center kitchen continues to be well-organized and sanitary. During 2023, the program's chef is celebrating 11 years of providing culinary delights to the children enrolled at Little Leaners! The cook remains passionate about her work in the kitchen and continues to support the introduction of new, fresh produce to dazzle children's palates.

Building and grounds are well-maintained. Classrooms continue to be arranged in a thoughtful manner keeping learning at the forefront. For the last 14 years, Little Learners Inc has continued to use their unique center rotational curriculum for childcare students. Ms. Martin discussed how the curriculum is regularly updated and offers a full 2-years with no repetition of lessons. Since 1994, Ms. Martin continues to teach the MWF morning preschool program which prepares the children for kindergarten readiness. Curriculum does include off-site field trip (e.g. pumpkin farm, apply orchard, nature center) experiences, family/staff conferences, fall open house event, milestone guidance, on-site guest speaker events (e.g. local library), themed days, and holiday/seasonal parties.

Little Learners Inc 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, and supports family programming activities. Little Learners Inc also sponsors a private social media page for enrolled families.

Little Learners Inc collaborates well with community agencies including the local school district, local businesses, TIES program, early access persons, Lions Club, Mt. Mercy College, and health professionals.

Little Learners Inc has emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. Little Learners Inc has successfully navigated through the 2008 Linn County flooding event, 2019 Polar Vortex, 2019 health (COVID-19) pandemic, 8/10/22 Derecho Storm, and 2023 compromised air quality incidents.

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. Staff were observed encouraging and engaging in hand washing at all levels. Staff encouraged children to "catch coughs" and "catch sneezes" in elbows. The program has supplies, policies and procedures for cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing. Cleaning checklists and reminders were observed to be posted in various areas of the center. One staff was observed to be moving about the building disinfecting high-touch areas when not in ratio.

On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were nurturing and attentive to the children's needs. Upon entering the infant room, gentle music could be heard playing in the background. Infant cares were observed to be gentle and engaging. Areas of study for those over infant age included "I can", apples, the state of Iowa, and the Bible story of Adam and Eve. Children have access to an array of materials (e.g. books, imaginative play options, puzzles, building materials, crafts, sensory) that encouraged innovative play. Activities observed were many including small group work (incorporating developmentally appropriate phonics and math skills) and circle discussion (e.g. sharing, music with movement, book reading of The American Flag). Staff provided a companionable presence allowing children to have many choices in their play experiences. Routine transitions (e.g. clean up activities, food service rituals) worked smoothly into the program's welcoming and cooperative play environment. Throughout the classrooms, staff were overheard providing children with many words of encouragement and engaging children in much meaningful discussion. 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:

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.