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

Name of Center: Community Early Childhood Center **Enrollment:** 120 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 7446

Street: 1315 S 24th St **City:** Fort Dodge Iowa **Zip** 50501 **County:** Webster

Mailing Address: 1315 S 24th St, Fort Dodge, IA, 50501

Director's Name: Sheri Morud & Renee Rude **Phone Number:** 515-573-5461

On-Site Supervisor(s): **E-Mail:** cecc@mediacombb.net

Date(s) of Visit: 03-17-2023

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: 03-10-2021

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 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	59	51	56	105	271
Summer					0

QRS Rating: 4

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 04-01-2022 to 04-01-2024
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Raymond Salsbury **Date:** 04-03-2023

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

NA

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

An unannounced annual visit was made to Community Early Childhood Center on 03-17-23 where I met with co-directors Renee Rude and Sherri Morud. Sherri and Renee have more than 30 years of experience in early childhood care and have been the co-directors of this program since 2004. Both have a Bachelor degree in early childhood education, and complete on-going professional development annually. The program is located in a free standing building and is overseen by a board of directors. The program provides daycare and preschool programming serving infants through school age children. There are approximately 110 children currently enrolled in the center served by 30 staff. All aspects of the program subject to licensing standards were reviewed during this visit.

The layout and structure of the building, and of the classrooms remains the same as in previous visits. The center completed an addition that added 4 new classrooms. Those rooms provided additional space for infants to allow the center to further separate groups by developmental ability, and also provided a large dedicated space for the older school age children. The existing classrooms are located around the exterior perimeter of the building with an open central area that was previously used for school age programming but is again available for indoor large motor play activities. Programming is provided to the children in classrooms determined by age and developmental ability. Each room has windows along the exterior walls that provide natural light, a view of the outdoors, and ventilation. Each room has secondary exits that provide direct access to the outdoors in all but one of the infant rooms. That room has a secondary exit that connects to another classroom. The emergency exits of the rooms that provide direct egress to the outdoors were maintained so that they are clear of obstructions. Each room has counters with multiple sinks in the room so that one can be used for hand washing and the other for food preparation related activities. All but one of the rooms have direct access to restroom facilities, and additional restroom facilities are located off the main central play area. Each room was observed to be clean with no immediate safety concern noted due to maintenance. Several of the classrooms have an elevated play area accessed by a short flight of steps and enclosed by a rail guard and Plexiglas barrier. Each room is divided into activity centers and makes use of furniture, low shelves, or play structures to define the activity centers. One issue that was noted with the addition construction is that the room that was remodeled for the younger school age children has an area that was previously a hallway that is now used for coat cubbies, and a "calm down" area. This does create a blind area that staff need to be aware of and ensure that all children are accounted for and staff are positioned so that they have direct line of sight of all children at all times.

Activity centers vary by the developmental levels of the classrooms with more options for older children. Activity center options in all classrooms include large manipulatives, art/crafts, library, and as the children get older include options for experience tables, dramatic play, music/movement, small manipulatives, science, math, and group learning. Each center was well stocked with toys and materials that were readily accessible to the children. The toys and materials were observed to be in good repair and generally appropriate to the ages of the children present. Each classroom had a daily schedule and curriculum posted. While having some similar general themes the classrooms do develop their own curriculum plans. Due to the center celebrating St. Patrick's and being on Spring Break the overall atmosphere was very more relaxed than the typical daily routine. Ratio was maintained in each classroom as required by age with at least 2 staff present in each room.

Good interactions were observed in all classrooms with the teachers being engaged with the children and/or attending to

their needs. Positive behavior management techniques were observed with the staff using proactive methods such as transition activities, reminders of expected behavior, and teacher lead activities to reduce the occurrence of behaviors. When children did have behavioral issues the teachers would redirect them, and help with problem solving. Supervision was noted as an issue in one classroom where the children were making use of the restrooms located outside of the classroom. Children were observed to be allowed to leave the classroom unattended and out of the direct line of sight of staff to use the restroom. While the building is a secure facility that limits access from individuals coming from the outside children still need to be supervised at all times. This allows staff to identify any concerns and provide assistance, or redirect inappropriate behavior that may occur.

Good health and safety practices were generally observed throughout the center. I was able to observe several diaper changes and staff did follow established procedures. Diapering procedures and handwashing postings were present by all changing stations and sinks though there was one bathroom located off a common area near the large indoor space that did not have the handwashing procedures posting. Good hand washing practices were observed both with the staff and the children washing their hands as required prior to meals, after restroom use, and other times that they became soiled. Good cleaning practices were observed with the staff directing the children away from the area when using chemical cleaners. Chemical cleaners, medications, personal belongings, and other items that could present a safety risk to children were stored in areas where they were not readily accessible. Most medications are stored in a cabinet in the kitchen that is not readily accessible to children and visitors. Good documentation was maintained for when medications were administered but the center does need to ensure that documentation is included for when medications are not administered. While it could be readily determined that the main cause for nondocumented administration was due to weekends when the center was not open a notation and legend should be developed to distinguish between this, days children did not attend, medications not being provided, or a dosage was missed. Each classroom does maintain a first aid kit and additional supplies are also available to replenish as needed. The center does maintain information regarding children with allergies and necessary response plans. Good safe sleep practices were observed. There were some minor issues observed during the visit that while not rising to the level of being a licensing violation should still be considered. This includes the presence of a powder substance, possibly corn starch or talcum, in an infant room. Powders and aerosolized sprays are not recommended in infant rooms with children who have lungs that are still developing. Additionally while in one classroom for older infants the teachers who were wearing heavier clothing including hooded sweatshirts had opened the windows due to being hot, but then removed the children's shirts when serving them a messy snack. While it is a positive that the staff were seeking to maintain a comfortable environment they do need to remain focused on ensuring that the environment is comfortable for the children who may have different needs due to differences in dress, metabolism, or activity levels. In this case while the room temperature would have been comfortable for the teachers, it would likely have been excessively cold for the children who had their shirts removed.

The center does have a full kitchen and meals are prepared on-site. The kitchen was observed to be clean. Good food handling and service practices were observed in the kitchen with staff wearing gloves when handling food, and staff in classrooms also wore gloves when serving meals. Good food storage practices were generally observed with items placed in an air tight sealable food grade container in the kitchen but not in some classrooms. As a reminder all food items regardless of whether being stored in the kitchen or classroom, and whether intended for child consumption or not must be stored as required by CACFP guidelines. This will help to reduce the risk of foods being an attractant to insects and rodents, or spoilage. A menu is posted and provides a good variety of meal options that meet CACFP guidelines. The children eat in the classrooms with the staff portioning food for them. Measured scoops were used to ensure that full servings were provided. The staff did provide supervision at the tables with the children.

The center playground is divided into two areas with one for older children and one for the toddlers. Rubber mulch is used for fall surfacing beneath climbing structures in the playground used by the older age children and a good depth of material was present. All equipment appeared to be in good repair. The toddler area does not have any climbing structures but does have a crawling structure, sandbox, and other toys. Foam rubber tiles provide a soft play area for the children. The playground is fenced both around the full perimeter and between the two spaces. Shade is provided by the building, mature trees, and an awning structure in the toddler area.

All required notices were posted in an area that was readily accessible and visible to all parents and visitors on the day of my visit. A random selection of staff and child files were reviewed and compared to the self-audits completed by the center. The self audit for the children's files was found to be accurate. Based on the self-audit and reviewed files there were 11 children that needed an updated physical, however the center did have documentation of the date for the scheduled pending renewal date for 7 of the files. The self-audit for the staff files was found to have inconsistencies when compared to the files that were selected for review on the positive with the self-audit not having been updated to include information that had been added to files. Based on the self-audit 3 employees needed one or more elements of training that is required within the first 90 days, and 9 needed an initial or updated physical, 4 needed an initial or renewed Iowa SING background check, and 18 needed an initial or renewed FBI Fingerprint background check. Again it is noted that the reviewed files did have information that was identified as not being present on the self-audit including those that needed background checks. Inspection logs and certificates were current and available for all required elements with the exception of Radon, and Emergency Drill records. The center moved to a system in the previous year where each classroom conducts and logs their own emergency evacuation drills. It was reported that the center is practicing the drills together but classrooms still log the

information for their room. This resulted in a situation where none of the classrooms had consistent documentation of drills being conducted for each month. It is recommended that the center return to a center wide drill practice conducted and documented by the main office personnel. Radon testing results were expired with the last testing having been completed in 2020. While the results were within actable limits averaging 3.5 piCu/L renewed testing is required every two years and needs to be conducted in every area where programming occurs. The center does own several vans that are used for transportation and vehicle maintenance and service records were available for each vehicle.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

The program does participate in the QRS program which seeks to exceed licensing standard and implement best practice recommendations. The program is currently rated as a 4 STAR program on a possible 5 STAR scale and is seeking to renew that endorsement.

The center has been in the process of renovations and expansion over the past couple of years, and looks to continue that with modifying the large open space currently used as an indoor large motor skill area. It was reported that the center is planning to construct walls to define another classroom in that space.

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

109.9(1)b: All files contain:A signed copy of DHS criminal history record check or any other permission form approved by the Department of public Safety for conducting an Iowa or national criminal history check. A copy of Request for Child Abuse Information.Copies of the results of Iowa records checks conducted.Copies of national criminal history check results.Any Department-issued documents sent to the center related to records check.
-- Number not in compliance: 18

109.10(15)b: Emergency instructions, phone numbers, and diagrams for fire, tornado, and flood shall be visibly posted and documented at least once a month for fire and tornado. Records shall be maintained for current and previous year.
-- Documentation was inconsistent with some classrooms not documenting that fire and tornado drills were completed monthly as required.

109.10(16)a: The center and supervisor shall ensure that staff knows names and number of children assigned. Staff shall provide careful supervision.
-- Children must remain with in direct line of sight and sound of staff at all times. Children were observed to be sent/allowed to go to a restroom located outside of classrooms where they were no in the sight of staff.

109.11(7)b: Centers at ground level that use basement area as program space, or have a basement beneath program space: Testing and plan for remedy of radon is conducted.
-- Documentation expired.

V. SPECIAL NOTES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

A full license will remain in effect at this time. Please provide a written response to the licensing consultant identifying a plan of action to correct and maintain those aspects cited as not meeting licensing standards and identifying an anticipated date of compliance. At least one visit will be made to the center during the next year.

*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.