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

Name of Center: Little GEM Learning Center - North **Enrollment:** 40 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 51891

Street: 4750 42nd ST NE **City:** Cedar Rapids Iowa **Zip** 52411 **County:** Linn

Mailing Address: 4750 42nd ST NE, Cedar Rapids, IA, 52411

Director's Name: Karlynn Fifield **Phone Number:** 319-200-2999

On-Site Supervisor(s): Karlynn Fifield **E-Mail:** ksmeisterling@gmail.com

Date(s) of Visit: 01-05-2023

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: 07-01-2022

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: Accredited NAEYC NSACA Other X NA

Program Serves: X Infants (0-23 mo.) X 2 Years X Preschool-Age 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	32	30	48		110
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 08-29-2022 to 02-01-2025
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons **Date:** 01-19-2023

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

II. IDENTIFY THE AREAS OBSERVED ON THE VISIT:

Little GEM operates the following two licensed programs in Linn County: Little GEM Learning Center (license #47824; opened 9/14/16) and Little GEM Learning Center - North (license #51891; opened 8/29/22). Specifically, this report pertains to Little GEM Learning Center - North. Little GEM Learning Center - North offers a variety of childcare options and preschool programming to meet the needs of families and children in the community. The program operates year-round Monday through Friday 6:30am to 5:30pm. The program serves infants through preschool-age children. Current enrollment is 40.

Founding multi-program owner is Katie Meisterling. Ms. Meisterling has a BA degree in elementary education and a MA degree in early childhood. Ms. Meisterling has several years experience working with young children and continues to participate in much child development related training. Combined director/on-site supervisor is Karlynn Fifield. Ms. Fifield has a BS degree in nursing, over 5 years experience working at Little GEM and continues to participate in much child development related training.

On , program space was observed.

III. IDENTIFY THE OBSERVED STRENGTHS OF THE CENTER:

Little GEM Learning Center and Little GEM Learning Center - North offer a variety of early learning programming and childcare options to help meet the needs of children and families in the community. Both programs are located in predominantly urban areas and accept a variety of funding sources. During 2022, Little GEM celebrated their 6th year of being in business and the addition of a second childcare location.

Little GEM has the following website: https://www.littlegemlearningcenter.com/. Little GEM also has a private social media page for enrolled families and current staff.

According to the family handbook, the mission of Little GEM Learning Center - North is "...to “Grow, Enrich, and Mentor” all children, staff, and families in our community in hopes that they will leave our program well equipped to achieve their full potential."

Little GEM has a history of participation in quality initiatives including local quality initiatives and QRS/IQ4K.

Founding original multi-site owner/director Ms. Meisterling is a local entrepreneur invested in the city of Cedar Rapids and surrounding community. In addition to childcare, Ms. Meisterling supports foster families, is a mentor for other programs, and advocates for local retail businesses. Management (e.g. Ms. Meisterling, Ms. Fifield) is knowledgeable of licensing guidelines as well as their own program's policies and procedures. Management is organized having 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.

Little Gem Learning Center - North has emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. Little GEM Learning Center successfully navigating through the 8/10/22 Derecho Storm event and 2019 pandemic.

Little GEM Learning Center - North has established optimal communication between the program/staff and families. The program has parent-staff/program information centers, offers program newsletters, utilizes technological communication resources, and supports family programming activities. Since opening, family activities have included a visit from Santa, Thanksgiving lunch, and holiday/seasonal celebrations (ornament making).

New outdoor signage celebrating the recent ownership change was installed fall 2022. Upon new ownership/management, the property received a massive revival (e.g. updated paint, flooring, new furnishings, new child materials). Program supplies continue to be added into classrooms. The center kitchen is spacious, sanitary and functional. Classrooms are arranged in a thoughtful manner with learning at the forefront. Children's accomplishments (e.g. artwork) are displayed throughout the program space. Curriculum includes learning through play, STEAM Fridays, on-site guest speakers (e.g. local visiting musician), extra on-site enrichment opportunities, and teacher inspired ideas. Since the last review, Ms. Fifield discussed how she has helped create curriculum resources to assist staff with daily planning.

Little GEM Learning Center - North partners well with those throughout the community including local school districts, early access persons, local businesses, CCR&R, City of Cedar Rapids, and health professionals.

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. The program has policies and procedures in place for cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing. Cleaning supplies as well as cleaning checklists/reminders were observed in various areas on-site.

On the day of the monitoring visit, staff were nurturing and attentive to the children's needs. Areas of study included winter wonderland, penguins, brown bears, and All about Emotion. Activities observed were many (e.g. infant cares, center play, book reading). Quite noteworthy was the staff/toddler room engagement (e.g. finger play, sign language) as well as an indoor group game of "Duck, Duck, Goose"! Children have access to an array of materials (e.g. books, imaginative play options, building materials, games, puzzles, sensory, crafts) that encourage innovative play. 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:

Review rule 109.9(1)d which states "A physical examination report. Personnel shall have good health as evidenced by a preemployment physical examination. Acceptable physical examinations shall be documented on Form 470-5152, Child Care Provider Physical Examination Report. The examination shall be performed within six months prior to beginning employment and shall be repeated at least every three years." Ensure each staff physical exam is documented on required Form 470-5152.

Continue to ensure all diapering surfaces are nonporous/nonabsorbent to help with cleaning and disinfecting after each diaper change.

Ensure there are designated areas for human milk to be stored in any refrigerator/freezer unit on-site and that all milk outside original container (e.g. human milk, staff personal milk) is labeled (e.g. name, date). Also, ensure there are designated areas in any refrigerator/freezer unit on-site for staff to store personal perishable food items and that all staff food is labeled.

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.