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

Name of Center: College Community Early Childhood Center **Enrollment:** 205 **License ID No. (Reapplications)** 50769

Street: 125 Prairie Hill CT SW **City:** Cedar Rapids Iowa **Zip** 52404 **County:** Linn

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

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

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

Date(s) of Visit: 04-02-2024

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: 09-27-2023

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 X NAEYC NSACA Other 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	18	18	263	81	380
Summer					0

QRS Rating: N/A

RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE:	
X	**FULL** license from 04-01-2023 to 04-01-2025
	PROVISIONAL license from
	DENIAL of initial application
	SUSPENSION of license
	REVOCATION of license

Licensing Consultant: Amy Lyons **Date:** 04-16-2024

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) commenced operations in August, 2019. CCECC is located in a building which is part of the College Community School District. CCECC operates several sites (CCECC - Creek, CCECC - Crest, CCECC - Heights, CCECC - Hill, CCECC - Ridge, CCECC - View, CCEC - CVT) which are all part of the College Community School District. During the summer, some full days of emergency closing (e.g. snow day), and some breaks (e.g. holiday, spring), this program has the ability to combine with other CCECC sites to provide full day child care. Specifically, CCECC provides early learning programming and childcare to children age infant through school-age. Current enrollment is 205.

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. Assistant director/ CCECC on-site supervisor is Erin Hill. Ms. Hill has a MA degree in early childhood special education and over 10 years of experience working with children.

On 4/2/2024, 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 management team includes multi-site early childhood principal-director Ms. Schulte, assistant director Erin Hill, administrative assistant Jenna Langhurst, early childhood instructional coach Sara Kayser, 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 seasoned CCECC management team have noteworthy systems of organization in place to help ensure administrative items are complete as required and maintained in a secure manner. 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. Specifically, staff at this location reported celebrating 25 years, 10 years, 8 years, 2 years, 1 year, and 3 months employment with CCECC. One staff discussed how he will soon have a BA degree though the TEACH program. Congratulations! Many CCECC staff have advanced degrees in education and early childhood development. Since 2009, CCECC has had an immense number of staff participate in the TEACH program. CCECC currently has 11 staff participating in the TEACH program. This is quite impressive! Each new staff is encouraged and given the opportunity to pursue a CDA at no training cost. Documentation indicates that CCECC employees often complete annual professional growth training that exceeds Iowa Code requirements (most recently all staff completing updated PBIS training). Management discussed how one CCECC was selected to be a PBIS demonstration site. Management talked about how CCECC values education and understands the link between education and quality programming. The program has a regularly updated professional orientation system for onboarding new staff and for continuous transfer of knowledge to seasoned staff. Since the last review, orientation has been updated to include more face-to-name training within the first 90 days of employment. The program utilizes the Iowa Wages Program and emphasizes personal accountability. Management discussed recent changes in staff compensation including vacation buy-back, increased wages and bonuses. Management acknowledged the hard work their highly qualified team of staff do each day and who continue to show their commitment to the children and families they serve. Management also continues to display their appreciation through staff shout-outs, special food days (e.g. soup day, sub lunches, baked potato bar, morning donuts, chocolate, fully stocked ice cream), and classroom door decorating contests (e.g. clever room doors observed #501 umbrellas, #502 "a spring in our step"). Management described their staff as "...an extension of a family..."

CCECC sites have emergency plans, policies, and procedures in place which are annually reviewed and updated as needed. CCECC sites 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 and 2023 air quality alerts.

CCECC 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. ReadyRosie). Inclusive registration events are held (e.g. recent meet and greet preschool families, parent-program conferences). Parents are invited to be part of the PBIS leadership team. CCECC regularly conducts a family survey and continues to note much program satisfaction with positive family feedback. In areas of the center, posted notes of gratitude for staff from families were observed.

Building and grounds are well-maintained. Since the last review, CCECC underwent an expansion project that included 4 new classrooms. A new staff break and conference room also was established. Strategic efforts continue to be put forth to help ensure a continuous quality environment is provided. CCECC has their own, personal, small custodial team that clearly take pride in the pristine condition of the facility. During the monitoring visit, licensing observed custodial staff to be highly vested in the maintenance of the building including receptacle emptying, replenishing hand washing/toileting materials, and cleaning/disinfecting. It's also quite evident staff take great pride in the condition of the building and their specific classrooms as evidenced by exceptional classroom organization. CCECC also has a collaborative partnership with the school district. CCECC has additional access to school administrative staff, school nurse, and kitchen personnel help ensure the building and grounds are safe, sanitary, and hazard free each day. There is an AED on-site. The program has access to their own spacious on-site storage sheds. There is an on-site holding kitchen with meals prepared at a neighboring school and then transported to the CCECC.

Upon entering the center, an electronic board displays CCECC information including important dates to remember with upcoming events. Spacious center hallways have been transformed into inviting areas (e.g. natural light, soft seating, work seating, issues of NAEYC "Young Children" professional journal, a program-family-child lending library) for small enrichment activities to take place, for staff to relax on break, for staff to engage in classroom planning, for one to one staff/child work to occur, and for families to stop and play/learn at drop-off and pick-up.

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

2024 summer programming and school-year 2024-2025 enrollment are well underway with established waiting lists. Management discussed several future goals related to curriculum improvements (e.g. physical activity, gardening. whole room of study approach).

CCECC sites collaborate well with many community partners including local businesses, health professionals, early access professionals, TIES, head start (e.g. new head start liaison), 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.

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. Areas of study in the center included trees, exercise, and gardening. Throughout the classrooms, children have access to an array of materials (e.g. games, books, sensory items, imaginative play options, building materials, crafts) that encourage innovative play. Activities offered and observed were many (e.g. infant cares, nap/quiet rest, music with movement, book reading, center play experiences, small group work, group discussions). It was noted - inclement weather occurred on the day of the monitoring visit and staff were observed cleverly responding with some child indoor large gross motor events in the spacious hallways! Staff provided a companionable presence allowing children to have many choices in their play experiences. Routine transitions (e.g. clean-up, face-to-name checks, lunch/food service rituals, nap/quiet rest preparation) worked smoothly into the program's welcoming and cooperative play environment. Room #208 was observed to have comforting music quietly playing during meal time. Staff were overheard providing children with many words of encouragement, utilizing PBIS teachings when needed 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:

Ensure all diapering surfaces are non-porous.

Licensing strongly recommends installing additional child hand washing sinks to the classrooms (particularly room #212) and/or directly outside child restroom/diapering areas.

Licensing strongly recommends installing a separate food prep area in room #212.

Licensing strongly recommends broom-cleaning tool storage be added to any area/room these are being stored (e.g. 501, 502).

Review medication policies and procedures with all staff to help ensure any medication labels are not expired (e.g. #501), there is a current written emergency plan on-site for any child with a special medical need and that current parental authorization for any maintained on-site.

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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.