Health and Human Services

Iowa Department of Health And Human Services

CHILD CARE CENTER ANNUAL EVALUATION

Name of Center: Montessori Children's House

Provider No.: 25423

Address: 1505 42nd St, West Des Moines, IA, 50266

County: Polk

Director's Name: Shyamli (Rini) Kumar

On-Site Supervisor: Denise Springer

Phone Number: 5152251073

E-Mail: director@themontessorichildrenshouse.net

HHS Visit Date: 10/24/2025

Licensing Period: 12/01/2025 to 12/01/2027

Fire Inspection:

Date Inspected: 04/14/2025

Comments: West Des Moines Fire Marshal. Fire Marshal inspections are required every three years for licensing. West Des Moines typically does annual inspections.

Report Visit Type:

- [ ] PTO
- [X] Licensing Visit
- [ ] Drop In
- [ ] Administrative Change

License Type:

- [X] Full
- [ ] Provisional

Quality initiative:

- [X] Accrediation — Comments: Association Illinois Montessori, American Montessori Society, International Montessori Council

Program Duration:

- [X] Year-Round
- [ ] School Year
- [ ] Summer Only

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Program Population Served:

- [X] Infant(0-<24 Months)
- [X] Toddler
- [X] PreSchool
- [X] School Age
- [ ] All Ages

LICENSE CAPACITY	Infants	2 Years	Preschool	School-Aged	Capacity
General	8	15	133	30	186
Summer					0

1. Basic Overview

A licensing inspection was conducted on 10/24/25. The director was present throughout the visit.

All areas of the program were observed. These areas observed consisted of classroom observations and activities, ratios, nutritional practices, health and safety practices, playground observation, field trip and transportation practices, and administrative review.

Montessori Children's House is located in West Des Moines. The center is a non-profit program and is overseen by a Board. The program has been in existence for over 50 years. The director is Rini Kumar and the on-site supervisor is Denise Springer. Rini has been the director since 2007 and with Montessori overall since 2002. Rini has a BA degree and is also an approved trainer for Montessori teaching. Denise has an accounting degree and has been with Montessori Children's House for over 15 years.

Montessori teaching methods are used in all of the classrooms. The six areas of learning children are exposed to are practical life, sensory, mathematics, language arts, cultural activities, and creative learning. Children learn at their own pace with the teachers as their guides. Montessori teaching promotes multi-age groups because the younger children learn from the older children and the older children benefit by teaching the younger children. A child must be 18 months of age to become enrolled and children enrolled at a later age must have prior Montessori experience. Special subjects of Art, Music, and Spanish are taught by teachers on certain days.

There are a total of 9 classrooms, although not all of them are in use at this time. Parents may choose full-time or part-time options for their child. There is a summer program for roughly five to seven weeks in the summer. Those hours are 8:30am - 5:30pm. Otherwise, the center is open during the school year from 7:30am - 6:00pm

During the visit, children were observed washing their hands, sitting down in the cafeteria area for lunch, having a story read to them by staff, having a large-group discussion being facilitated by staff, and playing on the playground. All staff were actively involved in all child activities. Children questioned gave specific answers as to where they relocate to for monthly fire and tornado (high wind) drills.

2. Identify Observed Strengths of the program

The center is celebrating their 57th anniversary this year.

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There is a secure entrance into the building. There are also security cameras located in several areas outside.

The center utilizes their nurse consultant, CCR&R and AEA as needed.

Monthly staff meetings are held. In addition to these meetings, monthly study/group discussions are held with all staff.

Each classroom has a monthly newsletter that is sent home to parents. Seasonally, there is a "center wide" newsletter sent to parents. Many teachers have on-line blogs that parents can view on the center's website.

All lead teachers have degrees. There are many tenured staff members who continue to work at this center as well as a few newer staff members. The director stated she had a great group of staff who work well together. Communication is stressed among staff.

There is a phone in each classroom. A PA system was installed at the end of 2013. An emergency weather alert system was also installed.

Each classroom has their own fenced in court yard area connected to the classroom that is accessible by the back doors to each classroom.

Staff and Board member pictures are posted in the main parent board area.

There has been some remodeling over the past year which includes fresh interior painting, outdoor siding repairs, and a new storage shed built.

As an option/courtesy to parents, staff will go outside to pick-up and drop-off children to parents curbside at the beginning and end of the day. Parent involvement is also stressed.

There is a janitorial cleaning company that cleans the center daily.

There are staff in-service days three times out of the year for staff to get training completed.

Staff were again engaged with children at different learning stations/activities that children were involved with.

The center does online enrollment (Transparent Classroom).

The center has good community supports and has won several community awards/recognitions over the past year.

The center is a true Montessori school and has several Montessori memberships.

3. Identify the aspects that fall below the standard

109.10(7): First aid kit: The center shall ensure that a clearly labeled first aid kit that is sufficient to address minor injury or trauma is available and accessible to staff at all times when children are: In the center. In the outdoor play area. On field trips (away from the center).
All first-aid kits should be labeled.

4. Any corrective action plans, provisional license, and safety plans-steps to get into compliance

All first-aid kits need to be labeled.

5. Special Notes/Recommendations

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Radon testing was last tested 8/30/24 - 9/9/24. All classrooms came back with radon levels below the 4.0 cutoff. Because levels were below 4.0, the center can move to testing for radon at least every five years now. So long as radon levels remain below 4.0, they can remain on a five year plan. If at the next testing, levels in any classroom come back 4.0 or higher, the center will have to have a mitigation plan, retest, and at least temporarily move back to testing every two years.

The furnaces are checked quarterly and were last inspected 10/17/25.

For nutrition, the center partners with the West Des Moines School District for lunches and the center then provides AM and PM snacks to children. During the summer months, parents are required to pack their children's lunches. The center will store lunches as needed.

It was previously noted that for transportation/field trips, parents are required to transport their own child to/from the field trip destination. There are some parent drivers as well, but they go through record checks as required if in ratio, alone with children other than their own, and/or have direct responsibility for child care.

I-Power and IQ4K were discussed at the visit. It appears most staff have I - Power profiles and are uploading training certificates. Any staff member no longer with the center should be unlinked from the center's I - Power group.

It was noted that in an area of the large playground area, there is a cement piece exposed. The center is aware of this and has a larger mat is on order. A mat they recently ordered to cover this area, was too small.

A new, full, two-year license is recommended. The center's current enrollment is 135 which is an increase from last year.

Date: 10/28/2025

HHS Licensing Consultant: Nate Knepper

Non-compliance with any of the mandated regulatory requirements listed above may lead to the cancellation or revocation of your Child Care License. Please take steps necessary to completely address each of the violations noted above.

Child Care Resource and Referral is an excellent resource for providers to access training options and support in your area. You can reach Child Care Resource and Referral at **https://iowaccrr.org**.