

## Children's Corner Pelican Rapids Officially Open

The New Year has brought some new business to Pelican Rapids. After months of prep work, Children's Corner child care center officially opened its doors and welcomed its first clients last week. The center opened with just the infant room for right now. They are currently serving four babies. "The first couple of days have gone great. It's nice to start out slow like this and really get things running," said Children's Corner Executive Director Sue TenEyck-Stafki.

The partnership evolved a few months ago when Pelican Valley Health Center's Riverfront on Main was trying to figure out what to do with their vacant ground level floor. "When we were looking at what to do with that space, we were looking for something that would not only benefit Pelican Valley but also our employees, the residents, and the Pelican Rapids community. This truly turned out to be a perfect fit for us and them," said Pelican Valley Executive Director Barbara Axness. "We know there's a need for child care in the community and we're glad we could help fill that need." Children's Corner has a three year lease with Pelican Valley.

The center based child care has a few notable differences from a home based child care. One of the major differences is in the regulations. Home based child care is regulated by the county where center child care, like Children's Corner, is regulated by the state of Minnesota. "We have a lot more rules and requirements ranging from our staff qualifications to how we can operate," said TenEyck-Stafki. "Our infant room has one teacher for every four infants but with that ratio, you know there's quality care being given," she added. With the regulations for a center, age groups are kept separate but it's something Children's Corner views as a benefit. "We do activities and learning based on age group so we can really focus on what they should be learning at that stage. With the infants right now, we're doing a lot of sensory things, playing with water, finger and feet painting, singing, talking, reading and interacting," she said. Learning is a central theme behind Children's Corner and they try to make every day filled with learning opportunities.

Another difference between center and home child care is the cost. "There are some misconceptions, I hear some people say how expensive center based child care is but each of our age groups has a different rate and there's a lot included in that rate," said TenEyck-Stafki. For infants, toddlers and preschoolers, a day at Children's Corner provides kids with qualified

teaching staff with strong child to teacher ratios, a structured learning environment with activities tailored specifically to the age group, breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack, a safe environment, lots of activities and fun. “It’s really a one stop shop, we offer daycare services and also education,” added TenEyck-Stafki.

A unique aspect to this Children’s Corner location is their location within an assisted living facility. It’s not a new thing to the organization, they operate a child care center within Perham Living. “We’re really looking forward to growing and expanding our intergenerational activities. We want to have our kids with the residents of Riverfront on Main at least one time a week,” said TenEyck-Stafki. Intergenerational care is becoming more common and has many benefits to it. “It’s good for the elderly; it’s good for our children. It’s a wonderful learning experience, they teach each other things,” she added.

Children’s Corner will expand their hours and services as they get staff on board. Their hours are currently 7:15am to 4:00pm, Monday through Friday. The goal is to get to 6:30am to 5:30pm. They are licensed to care for 8 infants, 10 toddlers and 16 preschoolers. Right now, the center has openings for teachers, teacher assistants and aides. Their open positions require anything from a high school diploma to college credits. They are looking for the following positions:

- Teacher qualified: Must have at least 16 college credits related to general education or other education courses and prior experience.
- Teacher assistant: Must have at least 12 college credits related to general education or other education courses and prior experience.
- Teacher aide: No college credits required but must have high school diploma or GED.

Anyone even interested in working with children who may not meet the all of the qualifications are encouraged to contact Children’s Corner. “If you have a love of children, want to be part of their learning and growth, this is a great opportunity,” said TenEyck-Stafki. There are resources available for people who want to become teacher qualified at little to no cost. Anyone who is willing to start as a teacher aide in an infant or toddler room can have their certification paid for by Head Start.

As for their goals for the future, the center is looking forward to a long term presence in the Pelican Rapids community. “We’d love to see a full center, thriving with kids and families.

There are a lot of studies that show how childcare positively impacts the town's economic success. We're excited to be here and be a part of it," said TenEyck-Stafki.

For Children's Corner information contact: 218-739-2847

Or visit: <http://childrenscornerlc.com>



Pictured:

Infant Teacher Tracy Elshaug, Building Lead Kristy Berg, Executive Director Sue TenEyck-Stafki



Preschool Room



Toddler Room



Play area