



DESERT SUN TEACHES:

- Health checks are part of our curriculum. They help the child transition from home to school.
- Children learn through repetition.
- Adults need to wait for a child to answer a question (count slowly to at least 30).
- Adults need to be at a child's eye level when communicating with a child.
- Parents need support in their parenting and knowledge of child development.
- The process (getting the glue or paint on the paper) is important, not the finished product. No two works of art should be alike.
- Children learn by using their senses, interacting with their environment, relating what is real, relative or important to them.
- Children need to learn appropriate social skills by age six to be successful in future years, including adulthood.
- Children only learn what they are ready for (e.g. Children cannot be taught how to talk or walk before they are developmentally and physically able). Children usually will not do something that they are not ready for (jumping from the climber, etc.).
- You cannot "teach" someone something if they do not want to learn what you are trying to teach.
- Children need to be respected and valued.
- Discipline should help children learn appropriate behavior through guidance, verbal and non-verbal examples.
- Children do best when they know what is expected of them.
- Children need limits set for rules and behaviors.
- Children need consistent routines and schedules.
- Desert Sun's curriculum helps children explore, discover and master skills that must be obtained before they can grasp abstract concepts such as math, reading or writing.
- Desert Sun's curriculum includes academics throughout the entire programs offered.
- Desert Sun's outside environment is a classroom.
- Adults should stand back and observe to see if children can work things out for themselves.
- Children should do for themselves (carry their own backpacks, blow their own noses, ask their friends to play with them).
- If it has not been in the hand, it is not in the mind. Snow is a good example. Unless you have actually experienced snow, it is almost impossible to have a full understanding of what snow is.
- Learning is a journey, it continues for a lifetime.
- Mistakes are to be learned from.
- Children automatically build on their previous skills, (knowledge) when they revisit something they have previously experienced. E.g. Toddlers will stack blocks with no plan in mind or any understanding of how or what they have done; Three year olds build on those skills, they may have a plan in mind what they want to build while discovering properties of

balance, gravity and pre math skills (both toddlers and three year olds generally do this activity by themselves); Four year olds generally have a vague plan in place before starting to build and frequently work with other children; Five year olds usually work together as a team; Older children and adults continue to build their skills each and every time they build with blocks.

- Adults should give children enough time to discover things for themselves.
- Adults should not “pester” children with question to access what they know.
- No child is just 3. He/she still brings characteristics of a one and two year old, as well as those of a three year old and some of a four and five year old.
- Computers are an important part of our culture. However, they do not teach children how to interact with others, problem solve with others, etc. Nor, do we feel that they should be a part of our curriculum. Children are at school to learn how to be part of a group, learn how to get their needs met, learn social skills, learn that they will not always get what they want and how to deal with like situations.
- Children do not have to share. This does not mean that we do not address this with the children. We help the children know that someone is waiting for a turn and when he/she is done using the swing or puzzle to give it to the waiting child. We talk about how hard it is to want something, how hard it is to wait for something and that when it is his/her turn he/she may use it without anyone taking it away from him/her.
- Adults should not decide when a child is done swinging, playing with a toy, etc. The child should make this decision.
- Children should not be forced to say “I’m sorry” or “please/thank you”. Again, this does not mean that we do not address this with children. We role model manners at all times, not only with children but with adults. We discuss how using certain words can express gratitude or feelings. If adults tell children when to say thank you or I’m sorry then the child will always need the adult to cue them. Desert Sun wants children to learn when and how to express their feelings on their own. With this understanding please know that there is NO “magic word”. What magic happens when a child uses these words?
- Children know when adults are talking about them – even if the adults are on the other side of the room.
- Adults should not talk about children (positive or negative) in front of them as if they were not there.
- Children need an environment that makes them feel safe and secure.
- No child should be forced to do something (e.g. eat, talk to someone, etc.)
- Desert Sun provides an environment for young children that offers many choices, which are child friendly, and encourages children to take risks. However, this does not mean that there are no rules or limits.
- Children should not be given choices if the choice is not theirs to make.
- Erase the word “OKAY” from your vocabulary. When you end a statement with the word “okay”, it gives the child a choice. Example: It is time to go to bed now, okay? It is better to say “It is time for bed now.”
- Children should be given choices whenever possible.
- Children need to learn what NO means. No means No.
- Children need to learn how to compromise.
- Children need to learn how to read others body language and facial expressions.
- Children need to learn respect for others property.
- Children need to learn to believe in themselves.

- A child's self esteem or self concept is very important for his/her future development.
- Children do not understand about lying until they are around 6 or 7 years of age.
- Parents should never sneak out of the classroom or away from their child; they must help build trust by providing the child the opportunity to learn how to deal with the situation.
- Children learn through play. This is their work.
- It is hard being a child.
- It is hard being a parent.
- Adults must get up and go to a child (instead of yelling across the room, etc.) when the child needs redirecting, when adult wants to communicate something to a child or when giving directions to a child.
- In the housekeeping center and sometimes other areas children are in charge of the play and who may enter into the play.
- Adults can and should learn from children.
- Children need to learn how to be assertive, get their needs met in appropriate and constructive ways.
- Children need to learn how to trust others and themselves.
- There is a difference between praise and encouragement. At Desert Sun we use encouragement. We feel that if a child is given praise (false or true) all the time then the child will learn to do things just for the praise, not because he/she wanted to do it to learn or to please themselves.
- The world needs all types of people; shy, quiet, reserved, outgoing, assertive, observers and doers, etc.
- Children learn by observing, even if they choose not to actively participate in an activity.
- Children need to be given an opportunity to "save" face and not backed into a corner.
- Reading to a child is the best way to teach a child how to read.
- Children need the opportunity and time to day dream.
- Children need to learn how to fill their time wisely and to find constructive things to do on their own.
- We must teach to the whole child. This includes social/emotional, intellectual, physical and creative (art, music, drama).
- Phonics and whole language must be integrated and taught together throughout the entire curriculum.
- This list of beliefs can and should grow as we continue to build a better understanding of how children think, develop and grow.