



**DESERT SUN CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER  
FAMILY HANDBOOK**

1512 West Elliot Road  
Chandler, Arizona 85224  
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# INTRODUCTION

## Mission Statement

Desert Sun Child Development Center's mission is to provide high quality education for young children and to assist parents in their role as primary educators of their children.

## Our Philosophy

The philosophy behind our curriculum is that children learn best by doing. Learning is not just repeating what someone else says; it requires active thinking and experimenting to find out how things work and to learn first hand about the world in which we live. In their early years, children explore the world around them by using all five of their senses. In using real materials such as blocks and trying out their ideas, children learn about sizes, shapes, and colors, and they notice relationships between things (pre-math).

In time, they learn to use one object to stand for another. This is the beginning of symbolic thinking. For example, they might pretend a stick is an airplane or a block is a hamburger. These early symbols – the stick and the block – are similar in shape to the objects they represent. Gradually children become more and more able to use abstract symbols like words to describe their thoughts and feelings. They learn to “read” pictures, which are symbols of real people, places, and things. This exciting development is symbolic thinking, which takes place as children play.

Play provides the foundation for academic or “school” learning. It is the preparation children need before they learn highly abstract symbols, such as letters (which are symbols for sounds) and numbers (which are symbols for number concepts). Play enables us to achieve the key goals of our early childhood curriculum. Play is the work of young children.

A very important goal of our curriculum is for children to learn to get along well with others and become enthusiastic learners. We teach children to become independent, self-confident, curious

learners who can work well with others. We focus on teaching them HOW to learn.

The four areas of development in our curriculum are:

1. Social/emotional – Helping children to develop independence, self-confidence and self-control. Teaching children to follow rules and routines, to make friends and to be part of a group.
2. Physical – Working to increase large muscle skills including balancing, running, jumping, throwing and catching. Also, focusing on small muscles in their hands including buttoning, cutting, drawing, stringing beads, and writing.
3. Cognitive – Helping children acquire thinking skills such as problem solving, asking questions, thinking logically, sorting, classifying, comparing, counting, making patterns, and using materials along with their imagination to show what they have learned.
4. Language – Teaching children to use their words to communicate with others. Helping them to listen and participate in conversations. Teaching the children to understand the purpose of print, to recognize letters and words, and to begin writing for a purpose.

## History and Background

Desert Sun Child Development Center has been serving East Valley families since 1977 by Peg Brokaw, who had been a teacher in the Child Development Laboratory at Arizona State University. The school rented space from various organizations throughout its existence and moved frequently due to increased enrollment and landlord facility requirements. In October of 1995, the Board of Directors for the school decided it was time to find a permanent home and negotiated a contract for the purchase of a building on Elliot Road in Chandler.

The property had been the home of the Dobson family when their local farm was in operation. The home was built in 1951, and therefore required extensive renovations in order to meet state licensing, city code, and preschool use requirements.

In the spring of 1996, Desert Sun opened its site at 1512 West Elliot Road in Chandler, Arizona, and continues to benefit the community's families with high quality early childhood education.

Desert Sun Child Development Center is a non-profit corporation in the State of Arizona registered with the Internal Revenue Service under 501 (c) 3. Desert Sun follows all of the Arizona Department of Health Services Child Care Facilities Regulations. We are dedicated to being an excellent resource for parents as the major educators of their young children. As a non-profit corporation, we have an active Board of Directors who work with the Director to determine budget and policies. The corporation has three divisions: Child Development (Parent/Toddler Interaction Program, Parent Participation Preschool and Parent Participation Primary School Kindergarten classes), Educational Services and Library Services.

### **Staff**

All staff members are highly trained professional teachers who adhere to Desert Sun's philosophies and programs.

### **Administration**

Trisha Lucas is the school's Educational Director. She is a graduate of Arizona State University with a degree in Family Recourse and Human Development. She has worked as an educator for fourteen years and has been at Desert Sun for thirteen years. She has taught Toddlers through Transitional Kindergarten. Trisha worked as the Assistant Director for several years before becoming the Director.

Susan Femiani is the school's Business Director. She has a Masters Degree in Business Administration from Arizona State University. She

came to Desert Sun twenty-eight years ago as a parent. While her children were in the school, she worked as an aide in the classroom. She has worked as Business Administrator for thirteen years.

### **Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors is the primary governing body of Desert Sun and is composed of the Desert Sun Directors, a limited number of Desert Sun Staff, Desert Sun families and anyone from the community who has an interest in helping guide Desert Sun. The Board is responsible for establishment of policy, the appointment of Directors, the preservation of the School's mission, strategic planning, finances and marketing.

Board terms are for three years and each Board member gets one vote (members from the same family are elected as one Board member and represent one vote. Also, the Business Director and Education Director represent one vote). Desert Sun employees may not comprise more than 50% of the Board of Directors. The Board members are elected annually by the whole membership of Desert Sun at the annual Members meeting.

Meetings are open to the general membership, and we encourage attendance by any interested parents. Meeting minutes are available to members in the Office or by request to the Board of Directors.

The members of 2011/2012 Board of Directors are:

Regina Abraham  
Michelle Dexter  
Kristen Boyd  
Susan Femiani and Trisha Lucas (Directors)  
Shannon Fossett  
Ryan Linnen  
Vicki Montei  
Gina Phalen (President)  
Nicole Quillan  
Tonya Cabral-Rohr  
Tony Rusch  
Michele Stange  
Jaime Votroubek

**The Board of Directors can be contacted at [Board@desertsun.org](mailto:Board@desertsun.org).**

## DESERT SUN CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER TIPS AND TECHNIQUES

### Beliefs

This is a brief list of what Desert Sun believes. The items below are the most appropriate to a Desert Sun parent of a 3 year old:

- Adults need to wait for a child to answer a question (count slowly to at least 30)
- Children only learn what they are ready for (i.e., Children cannot be taught how to talk or walk before they are developmentally and physically able)
- Children need to be respected and valued
- Discipline should help children learn appropriate behavior through guidance, verbal and non verbal examples
- Children need perimeters set for rules and behaviors
- Children need consistent routines and schedules
- Children should do for themselves (carry their own backpack, blow their own nose, ask their friend to play with them)
- Learning is a journey, it continues for a lifetime
- Adults should give children enough time to discover things for themselves
- 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
- Children should not be given choices if the choice is not theirs to make

- Children should be given choices whenever possible
- Children need to learn respect for others property
- A child's self esteem or self concept is very important for his future development
- It is hard being a parent, but also very rewarding
- Children need to learn how to be assertive, get their needs met in appropriate and constructive ways
- The world needs all types of people; shy, quiet reserved, outgoing, assertive, with both observers and doers

### Hints For Adult Participation in Classroom

- Listen to the child while looking at him at his eye level.
- Wait for the child to answer questions.
- Sit down whenever you can because you are closer to a child's world.
- Expect the best to happen.
- Accept child's explanation.
- Give choices whenever you can.
- State the limits in a positive and matter-of-fact manner when there can be no choice.
- Rely on your own good judgment as to safety and health concerns. Handle a situation as you feel it should be handled. Later discuss it with the teacher. Later means in a note, phone call

or sometime other than just before or after school.

- Observe child while activities are going on. Keep a note pad handy to jot down what you see – to later share at home or with the teacher.
- Wear “play clothes”.
- Join in group activities. Your participation shows child that school is important to you. It then becomes important to the child.
- Talk with the children. Please do your adult talking at another time.
- Have Fun!

### **Discipline/Redirection**

Discipline such as physical punishment and psychological coercion are not used. Teachers will not use threats or derogatory remarks and will not withhold or threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline. Redirection is used as a guidance method, which entails stopping the undesirable behavior and directing the child to an alternative activity or desirable activity.

Sarah is throwing a block. “Sarah, blocks are for building. I cannot let you throw them. Here are some bean bags you can throw.” OR "Sarah, blocks are for building. Here, I'll help you build. What shall we build?"

For redirection to be effective:

- You must be firm in stopping the negative behavior. First try to stop it verbally. If the child continues, go to the child and actively stop the behavior.

Harry is at the easel. Harry begins flipping paint around the room with the paintbrush. "Harry, paint stays on the paper; use the brush on the paper." Harry continues flipping paint. Teacher goes over to Harry, takes hold of brush

(not Harry's hand) and moves it to the paper. "Harry, here is where the point goes, on the paper. Paint is not for throwing. It could get all over people. We throw balls."

- The substitute activity or behavior must be equal to the undesirable behavior.

"Harry, you would like to mess with paint today. I cannot let you mess at the easel, but you may mess with finger paint (or play in water or wet sand). Let's go over to the table and get some out. Would you like red, yellow, or blue today?"

The key factor in redirection is that you do not leave the child hanging in mid-air. You are telling or showing the child what he can do, as well as, what he cannot do. In this way, the child knows what is allowed and what the limits are. Here are some examples below:

- Spitting

"I won't let you spit on anybody. If you have to spit, do it in the toilet (or corner of yard).

- Hitting

"I can't let you hit people. Hitting hurts. If you have to hit out, then bang on the floor (or punching bag, or clay, or pillow). I know how you feel, but I won't let you hurt people, and I won't let them hurt you."

- Yelling

"Perry, please don't yell across the room to your friends. Walk over to them and speak right to them."

- Dumping Toys

"Mary, I'd like to see you finish the puzzle instead of dumping it on the floor. Let's pick up the pieces and study the shapes. Maybe we can figure out how to do it."

# GENERAL POLICIES FOR PROGRAM

## Facility Regulated by DHS

The Arizona Department of Health Services (DHS), Office of Child Care Licensure regulates Desert Sun Child Development Center. The License states that we may provide only part time classes during the school year and may provide summer school classes for school-aged children.

DHS may be reached at:  
150 N. 18<sup>th</sup> Ave., Suite 400  
Phoenix, AZ 85007-3244  
(602) 364-2539

## Report Incidents

All incidents (i.e., car, verbal, racial, physical, etc.) are to be reported to the Desert Sun office within 24 hours of the incident. This is private property and this includes the parking lot area, too.

## Inspection Reports

Parents upon request may view all fire, health and licensing reports.

## Hours of Operation

- During the regular school year the office is open Mon. through Thursday 8:30am to 3:30pm and on Fridays from 8:30am to 12:30pm.

## Equal Rights

Membership and registration for all programs and classes are open to the total community regardless of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, socioeconomic background, age, handicap or gender.

## Discipline

All actions of Master Teachers and Aides are founded in the basic assumptions that every individual is unique and, therefore, deserves respect (love) for him, for anything he owns, and for anything he produces or does. This statement

does not mean that inappropriate behavior is condoned, but that the person who shows the inappropriate behavior is treated with respect (love) and is assisted to acquire more appropriate ways of behaving. General behavior objectives for each class are set up with the age of the group and the individuals in each group as determining factors. For children with persistent inappropriate behavior, a team including parents, teachers and other professionals will work together to develop and implement an individual plan to support the child's inclusion and success.

## Forms

Each division has specific forms that must be filled out by the participating staff and member families. These are required by the regulations under which the State of Arizona and/or the U.S. Government license Desert Sun.

## Free Play

Desert Sun believes that "free play" is an integral part of a child's learning curriculum. It is within the Master Teachers' responsibilities to intentionally provide for the child an environment so designed that each part of the four areas of growth and development (physical, creative media, intellectual, social-emotional) are available. Further, it is through observations of the child at play that the teacher can evaluate the child's learning progress, can determine further curriculum and/or environmental choices to offer and can decide the wisdom of entering into the child's "free play". Thus, Desert Sun believes that children need to have freedom to choose activities with time enough to initiate "free play", participate in it, and to close it off. "Free play" is believed to be children's most efficient teaching device and sufficient time should be allowed for it within the time and environmental limitations.

## Educational Viewpoint

Desert Sun Child Development Center is based on the concept that parents are the significant teachers

in their child's life. We hope to be a resource to you in this role as teacher of your young child. Towards this end, we encourage you to participate in your child's education at Desert Sun.

Desert Sun has its philosophical roots in the fields of child development and early childhood education. The program offers "academic content", such as reading and math in developmentally appropriate ways. Research has shown that children must experience their world through visual, auditory, and tactile means in order for brain development to progress to the later level of dealing with abstractions of numbers and letters. Thus, teachers at Desert Sun offer academic content through experiences, which require children to "DO" to construct their knowledge. As the young child progresses, these concepts will be strengthened though usually not in the familiar worksheet format. We believe this "hands on" approach to learning assists children in building a foundation for understanding later abstractions.

### **Notices/Fliers/Posters**

All notices, fliers, and posters must be submitted to the Desert Sun office for approval before being distributed or posted at the school. No selling of items or soliciting is allowed at Desert Sun.

### **Siblings and Visitors**

Desert Sun asks that siblings and visitors not be brought to class. Extra children in the classroom change the dynamics of the class. State licensing only allows a certain number of children in the classroom.

### **Special Needs Children**

If your child has a condition, which may have the potential for a medical emergency or any behavioral, physical or mental challenge that may lessen the child's potential to fully participate in classroom activities, please let the Director know. Teachers, aides and parents may be made aware of any conditions so that they may know how to react

if an emergency should arise and be able to interact with your child at an optimal level. Parents may need to provide a full time aide for their child if requested by Desert Sun staff.

### **Snacks and Nutrition**

Snacks are served as an integral part of the learning environment. Children develop social and language skills and practice small muscle development through snack activities as well as obtain nutritional benefits. Snacks will be served "family" style. Families are to provide snacks on a rotating basis. All snacks must be pre-packaged. No home-baked snacks are permitted. Monthly snack menus will be handed out prior to the beginning of each month so families will know what to bring for snack and when. If your child is unable to attend class on his scheduled snack day, please arrange to trade snacks with another family.

### **Birthdays**

Birthdays may be celebrated with special snacks. No foods prepared at home may be served. Children are encouraged to bring favorite foods, which may or may not be cookies or cakes. However, the needs of individuals must be considered. Children with summer birthdays may pick a special day during the school year on which to celebrate. Due to Fire Department regulations no candles may be lit.

### **Party Invitations/Thank You Notes/Gifts**

Desert Sun does not allow parents or children to distribute ANYWHERE ON SITE (includes parking lot) birthday invitations, thank-you notes or gifts of any type. This policy is in place to prevent hurting young children's feelings. Please mail all invitations, thank-you notes, or gifts.

### **Holiday Celebrations**

Desert Sun has determined that in line with its purpose to be a support and a resource to parents with young children, class activities concerning a holiday will be kept matter-of-fact and low key

leading to the event. This will allow parents to set the tone for their celebration within the home. It will also allow the very young child, whose emotional system is still growing and maturing, the chance to join the celebration without emotional overload. Family traditions are stressed rather than a specific holiday.

### **Daycare**

Desert Sun DOES NOT provide childcare of any kind, before or after school programs. All classes are part time.

### **Diapering**

No diapering is allowed at any time in the facility. Desert Sun is not licensed for day care of infants or toddlers, so it does not have an appropriate area for diapering children. All diapering must be done in a member family's car and the soiled diapers must be disposed of at a trash site other than that of Desert Sun's.

### **Restrooms**

Children's restrooms are coed. The main restroom doors are to be opened when children are using the facilities. Please close doors when done. This area is heated and cooled.

### **Field Trips**

Each class may plan trips away from the classroom as part of the on-going curriculum. All field trips will be taken in family cars, which have and use individual seat belts and car seats for each child. Children's emergency cards are to be with the adult in whose car they travel. All Arizona Department of Health services, Office of Child Care Licensure regulations will be followed. Parents are to be notified of field trips two weeks in advance and must sign permission slips for each trip. Staff members do not transport children under any circumstances.

### **Transportation**

Desert Sun DOES NOT provide transportation of any type. Parents are required to provide

transportation to and from school at the class beginning and ending release times.

### **Appropriate School Dress for Children**

We like creative activities, so children and parents come to school in "old" clothes for participating in painting, wet sand play or pouring juice for snack. For safety reasons, children and participating parents are asked to wear athletic shoes with closed toes and heels to school.

Please bring to school each day:

- A complete change of clothing, including shoes. Please be sure all items are clearly marked with your child's name. Be sure clothing and shoes are appropriate for each season.
- A backpack for your child to keep its change of clothing in and to carry art projects and handouts home. Be sure to clearly label your child's belongings and the **OUTSIDE** of your child's backpack.

Please do not bring to school:

- Toy guns, weapons, super hero toy figures, or whistles. Toys brought from home are to be placed on the show and tell rug for sharing with friends. Items on the show and tell rug are to be looked at only, not played with.

### **Equipment check-out**

Most equipment (inside and outside) may be checked out. All materials must be cleaned and repaired before being returned. The borrower may be assessed a restoration and/or cleaning fee for any equipment that is brought back in disrepair.

### **Pets**

Would you like a new pet, but only for the weekend? The animals at Desert Sun need someone to care for them on weekends. The

animals would love to spend some time with you in your home. The animals may also be taken for holidays or over the summer vacation. See animal checkout sheets located in each classroom.

### **Teacher/Child Ratio**

3 Year Old Class	1/8
Pre-Kindergarten Class	1/9
Transitional Kindergarten Class	1/9
Kindergarten	1/10

### **Termination from the Program**

Desert Sun believes strongly in the importance of the child's social development and the pervasive effects of positive family interaction. Pro-social behaviors relate to a child's later school success and the development of effective skills for living in our society. Conversely, negative or disruptive

interaction styles in young children may set up a pattern of social rejection. Such patterns may ultimately result in a child having low self-esteem and, often, difficulty functioning in our schools and our culture. Since these social behaviors can be observed in young children, it is our policy to notify parents when problematical behaviors outside of normal social development persist. Desert Sun advocates counseling and immediate family action in this event; appropriate community resources will be suggested. Parents may be asked to accompany the child in class. Should behavioral improvement not occur, Desert Sun, through its Director, reserves the right to terminate such families from the program. This is done in order to preserve a harmonious atmosphere in the classroom and to strengthen the importance of the philosophy that the ultimate responsibility for social learning occurs within the family unit.

## MEMBERSHIP, REGISTRATION AND TUITION

### Membership

Membership is required of all families enrolling in the Child Development Division classes (Parent /Toddler Interaction, Preschool or Primary School). Membership is extended to all staff. Membership is open to the community.

### Registration

Currently involved continuing member families are given first choice of available classes; and non-member families from the community are given second choice of classes on a first come, first serve basis.

In the event of over enrollment of a class, the following criteria will be used for registering children in the class:

1. Children currently enrolled in program
2. Siblings of children currently enrolled
3. Current members of Desert Sun and past members of Desert Sun, ranked according to total number of years of enrollment, Board of Director's service and employment.
4. General public

### Payment of Fees

Each Division has specific fees that must be paid by participating staff and member families. Some of these are required by regulations but most of these fees pay for the program(s) for which the money is being collected. Desert Sun has no sponsoring agency, which acts in a fund raising capacity. Tuition and fees are governed by the following policies.

- Tuition for all classes is due on the first of each month.
- All monthly tuition payments received five working days after the 1st of each month are to include a late fee of \$10.00. There will be an additional \$10.00 fee for each week the tuition is late.
- Tuition is due regardless of attendance. Make-up classes are not available.
- If withdrawal becomes necessary, **thirty days written notice is required.** Tuition payment will be required during that 30 day period.
- If a check is returned from the bank for insufficient funds, closed account or other reason so that Desert Sun is unable to collect the funds, the person or family writing the check will be assessed \$15.00 for the returned check.
- **Fees paid at registration are NON-REFUNDABLE and NON-TRANSFERABLE.** In the event of extraordinary circumstances, an appeal may be made to the Executive Board for a refund. Any appeal to this policy must be made in writing and submitted to the Director of Desert Sun. The appeal must state the amount requested and details of the extra-ordinary circumstances for which the refund is requested and documentation to support any claims made. The Director will present the appeal to the Executive Board at the next scheduled meeting and the claimant will be notified in writing of the Board's decision. Any decision made by the Executive Board is final. At the discretion of the Director, the Board of Directors may review the appeal if the Directors meeting is to be held prior to the next Executive Board meeting.
- There is a 10% reduction in the tuition for additional children in the same family. The reduction is applied to the lowest tuition.

- Should you foresee difficulty in meeting a scheduled payment, please contact the Business Director.
- If tuition payment becomes more than 30 days delinquent, the student enrollment will be canceled. Desert Sun reserves the right to require payment up front if there has been a history of financial problems.

**Payment Procedures**

All families have a payment envelope marked with their family's name and payment dates. These envelopes are kept in a box near the office door. Put your check in the envelope and move it to the side compartment in the payment box. The bookkeeper will record your payment and return your envelope to its original box. The payment schedule and record is on the front of the envelope.

**Monthly Expenses**

Desert Sun has expenses that need to be met every month so it is important that monthly tuition is paid on time. The following are some examples of our many expenses:

- |                                     |                            |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Copies                              | Open Houses                |
| Staff Training                      | Clean-up End of Year       |
| Office Supplies                     | Taxes / Licensing Fees     |
| Kitchen Supplies                    | Classroom Supplies         |
| Lesson Planning                     | Set-up/Clean-up            |
| Equipment                           | Financial Audit            |
| Mortgage                            | Parent Seminars            |
| Insurance                           | Landscaping                |
| Animal Supplies                     | Insurance                  |
| Bathroom Supplies                   | Parent/Teacher Conferences |
| Home Visits                         | Employee Related Expenses  |
| Maintenance                         | Parent Orientation         |
| Utilities                           |                            |
| Developmental Screening of Children |                            |
| Dues for Professional Organizations |                            |

Desert Sun's staff strives to offer unlimited supplies to each child and works very hard at getting many items donated and/or individual staff members absorb the additional costs personally.

# HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES

## Emergency Procedures

First aid kits are available and maintained in each classroom and on the outside play areas. A complete First Aid box is also kept in the school office and in each bathroom. First aid kits are taken on field trips and outings away from the school. When a child is injured it is the Master teacher's responsibility to fill out an accident report. A copy of the report will be given to the family within 24 hours.

In case of minor injuries, the child will be cared for and parents will be told of the incident when they come for the child at the end of the school day. Desert Sun employees do not remove splinters from children. This could result in infection. Parent is called to come and get the child if the splinter cannot wait until the end of school.

In case of more serious injury, employees will first notify the Paramedics, then the parents of a child or adult.

Every effort is made to create a safe environment including protection from hazards such as electrical shock, burns and scalding, slipping, tripping and falling. Floors coverings are secured to prevent slipping and falling. No baby walkers are allowed.

## Immunizations

Arizona State law mandates that all children enrolled be required to have their immunizations up-to-date prior to starting classes. Current medical documentation of child's immunization record must be on file.

## Medications

Medications may be dispensed under special circumstances. Please contact the school office for the required paperwork. No medications may be stored in your child's backpack or cubby. This includes sunscreen.

## Infectious Diseases

Desert Sun will follow the local, county and state guidelines concerning control of infectious diseases.

## Illness

Absence from school for reasons other than illness is discouraged. Unnecessary absence from school may have a bad effect on a student's work habits and progress. Going to school is NOT a child's decision -- it is an adult decision.

One of the problems most often confronting parents of school-age children occurs when a child complains of not feeling well on a school day. A decision must be made as to whether the child stays home or goes to school.

You do not want to keep a child home if he really is not sick; but you also do not want to send a sick child to school. These hints are designed to provide guidelines to be followed until your doctor can be contacted for his opinion. Contacting your doctor should be done without delay. If you have no family physician, the names of doctors in your area can be obtained by contacting your County Medical Society. **THIS INFORMATION IS NOT INTENDED AS MEDICAL ADVICE.**

Your child should be kept at home if he has any of the following:

➤ Cold

A child with a cold and/or a deep hacking cough belongs home even though he has no fever.

➤ Sore Throat with White Spots

If your child complains of a sore throat and white spots can be seen in the back of his throat or if fever is present, keep him home and call your doctor.

➤ Fever

A fever is a warning that all is not right with the body. The best way to check for fever is with a thermometer. No child with a temperature over 100 degrees should be sent to school. When no thermometer is available, check the child's forehead with the back of the hand. If it is hot, keep the child home until temperature can be checked with a thermometer. Do not allow the child to return to school until he has been free of fever for 24 hours.

➤ Stomachache, Vomiting, Diarrhea

Consult your doctor if your child has a stomachache, which is persistent or severe enough to limit his activity.

If vomiting occurs, keep your child home 24 hours after vomiting has stopped.

If diarrhea occurs, keep your child home 24 hours after diarrhea has stopped.

➤ Rash

A rash may be the first sign of one of childhood's many illnesses, such as measles or chicken pox. A rash or "spots" may cover the entire body or may appear in only one area. Do not send a child with a rash to school until your doctor has said in writing that it is safe to do so.

➤ Pain

Toothache: Contact your dentist.

Earache: Contact your doctor.

➤ Bacterial Infections

A child being treated for bacterial infections with antibiotics must have 24 hours of treatment before being allowed back in school, or have a physician's written approval to return to school prior to that time.

Pinkeye, an infection of the eye, usually displays redness, yellowish mucus and itching. Keep the child home and call your doctor.

The Director has full authority to deny any child access to the classroom due to illness or suspicion of contagious illness, or if the child is not well enough to participate in the classroom activities. In the event a child becomes ill at school, the school will immediately notify the parent or guardian. The child will be supervised in the school office until the family can pick up the child.

### **Reporting an Absence**

If your child is unable to attend school, please call the Desert Sun office to report the absence. If your child is ill, please indicate the nature of the illness. State laws require Desert Sun to record this information in an illness log.

### **Insurance Coverage**

Desert Sun carries accident and liability insurance as required by Arizona Law.

### **School Grounds**

All aspects of the physical premises are kept in conditions, which are as hazard-free and fire-safe as possible. No smoking is allowed in the facility or on school grounds or in the presence of children. Firearms are prohibited on school grounds. Desert Sun follows public health requirements to avoid hazards such as air pollution, lead and asbestos. Outside activity is limited during smog or air pollution alerts. Areas recently painted or renovated are well ventilated before children occupy them.

### **Play Yards**

Desert Sun has two play yards. The yard on the south is for children enrolled in the preschool and primary school classes. The north yard is for the Parent / Toddler Interaction classes. Children need to stay in their own yard. Each side is set up to meet specific developmental skills appropriate for the ages of the children.

Desert Sun's general rule is that children are not allowed on any of the play yards outside of organized school-sponsored activities. The reason

for this policy comes from concern for the safety of the children. Because Desert Sun does not have staffing available to monitor the play-yards outside of school-sponsored activities, we must insist that parents help us monitor and enforce this policy.

Desert Sun is sensitive to the fact that there are occasions when parents are picking up or dropping off an older child or other sibling with a different start or release time. If parents have another child with them on those occasions, the parents must assume the responsibility of supervising their child at all times. Please be aware of the fact that children must adhere to the safety rules for the climbers and may not play on climbers that are inappropriate for their age.

To keep children safe on the play yard, here are some guidelines:

- Children need to be directly supervised by a Desert Sun staff member.
- Children are not to play behind or inside the storage sheds.
- No jumping from the second or top level of the climber.

- Do not allow children to climb the fence. If a ball goes over the fence the child and an adult may go out the gate and walk around to retrieve it.
- Sand needs to stay in the sandbox.

### **Fire Drills**

Fire evacuation plans are posted in each room. The procedure is to go quickly to the area north of the parking lot on the West Side of the building. Desert Sun holds monthly fire drills and encourages families to hold fire drills in their homes as well.

### **Visitors on Site**

All visitors are required to check in with the school office immediately entering the school. Visitors will be issued a Visitor's Badge and will be escorted by Desert Sun staff at all times.

### **Main Gate Locks**

The main gate near the parking lot on the West Side of the building is to be **CLOSED AND LOCKED AT ALL TIMES**. Parents are asked to be responsible for securing the lock as they enter and exit the facility. Please do not allow children to handle the lock.

# **FAMILY PARTICIPATION**

## **Donations**

Desert Sun has a 501 (c) 3 status with the IRS. All donations to Desert Sun can be used for income tax purposes according to the current regulations for donations under this status. Donations of supplies from families are welcomed and appreciated.

## **Parent in Class**

Families may visit any area of the facility at any time during the program's regular hours of operations. When you do choose to be in class, please try to focus attention on your child, interact and play as the child directs. If your child does not want you to play, just stand back and observe, or feel free to interact with another child who may really need to share a special project with someone.

The teacher may ask for some assistance from you. Parents can lead a group activity if they desire, after discussing it with the teacher. However you choose to participate, Desert Sun believes that it should be in a way that is most comfortable for you and your child.

## **Volunteers**

Desert Sun encourages all families, regardless of family structure, socioeconomic, racial, religious and cultural background, gender, abilities, or preferred language, to share special talents and skills to help enrich the program. Five hours of volunteer time per semester outside of the classroom is expected for preschool and kindergarten families. Families in the parent/toddler interaction program are asked to perform 2 1/2 hours of volunteer time per semester. Outside of the classroom includes many areas: special events and fundraisers, preventive maintenance, general maintenance, repairing items, office work and yard work. In lieu of volunteer time, preschool and kindergarten families may choose to donate \$50.00 per semester. Families enrolled in parent/toddler classes may choose to donate \$25.00 per semester in lieu of volunteer time.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### **Brown Bag Lunches**

Brown Bag lunches are held occasionally throughout the year. Families are encouraged to bring lunch and a blanket and picnic on the play yard. Staff participates in this activity. *Parents are to supervise their children.*

### **Birthday Celebration**

This event is held every year in January. Families are encouraged to bring lunch and a blanket and picnic on the play yard. All gifts given to Desert Sun are tax deductible.

### **Parent Workday**

Each year, parents are invited to participate in a workday. Broken equipment is repaired, painted or built. This is the best way of keeping our equipment in repair. We encourage all families to help.

### **Parent Seminars**

Parent Seminars are offered several times each school year on a sign-up basis. Topics might include: child development, educational goals, assessment, cognitive development, self-esteem, discipline, communication, and fathering. Occasionally, seminars are held separately for each class. If minimum enrollment is not met, seminars will be canceled.

### **Membership Meetings**

A membership meeting is held during the month of April each year. The year's report is presented and expiring seats on the Board of Directors are filled by a vote of the membership.

### **Other Events**

Additional events are sometimes held, such as a Parent Orientation meeting at the beginning of the school year and the End-of-Year Picnic in May. These are scheduled when staff and/or member families are available to organize and help facilitate them.

## PARENT/TODDLER INTERACTION PROGRAM

The parent/toddler interaction program is designed to be a support to families with children under three years of age. Rich, mutually satisfying interaction between parent and young child has been found to be the most critical factor related to healthy overall development in humans. Desert Sun respects each child as an individual and each interaction as unique to that moment in which it occurs. The classes that comprise the Parent/Toddler Interaction Program provide resources to parents in such areas as: meeting play needs, child development, problem solving in behavior, management and guidance and managing routines in life with a child. A parent or primary caregiver is required to attend the Parent/Toddler Interaction classes with their child.

### **Available Classes: (ages are listed as of September 1)**

Toddler: Open to families with children 17 to 36 months of age.

### **Arrival and Sign-In Procedures**

1. Morning school starts at 9:15 a.m. and ends at 11:00 a.m.
2. The staff arrives 30 to 60 minutes before school to set up activities and equipment so they will be ready when children arrive at the start of class. When you and your child arrive early, teachers cannot adequately prepare for the day. If you must arrive early, or happen to occasionally, we would appreciate it if you would supervise your children in a quiet, out-of-the-way place. You may want to bring a favorite book or toy to share. Children are not allowed on the play yards while waiting for health checks.
3. Health checks are the first happening of the day. If your child does not pass the health check, he or she will be sent home with parent. If child is healthy, then he or she may be signed in.
4. Sign-in sheets are located in the classroom. Arizona State Law requires that all children must be signed in when they arrive and signed out when they leave. These sign in sheets are also used to call roll in the event of a fire or fire drill. It is very important that this policy is followed at all times. You must sign, in ink, your full signature.
5. Before and after school is not the time for parent/teacher discussions. However, the staff does want to talk to you. So, please call and set up an appointment or leave a note with the teacher.
6. Be sure to check classroom bulletin boards, and your child's file folder for important notices. A daily time schedule, snack list, class roster and weekly lesson plans will be posted for parents' observations on the teacher's bulletin board.

## PARENT PARTICIPATION PRESCHOOL AND PRIMARY SCHOOL

The parent participation preschool and the primary school reinforce the concept that parents are the primary educators of their children. Master Teachers plan goals and objectives and prepare the school environment. Families are encouraged to contribute to the planning process for activities and services and take an active part in daily school activities.

Each family is encouraged to participate in their child's education. Families individually plan participation with the master teachers. Participation is encouraged to be regular in-class participation (twice a month), but may include making educational materials, equipment, special class programs, office help, etc. There are as many ways to participate, as there are families.

### Parent Participation Preschool

This program offers classes for three, four and five year olds. The Master Teachers design discovery-type learning environments with a strong whole language curriculum. The preschool classes introduce a math program that is an excellent background for later abstract thinking. Reading, writing and other age-appropriate academic and social interaction skill activities are also included.

### Parent Participation Primary School

This program offers a Kindergarten class for five and six year olds. The state certified Kindergarten teacher develops an exploratory learning environment, which has strong whole language foundations. This class exceeds public school district guidelines for kindergarten. The small class size and low student-teacher ration allow the Master Teacher to develop a curriculum designed to meet each student's developmental level, learning style and interests. Students learn reading, written expression, mathematics, and science through developmentally appropriate lessons and activities.

### Available Classes:

2 day 3-Year-Old Class: Open to families with children who are 3 by 8/31/11.

3 day 3-Year-Old Class: Open to families with children who 3 by 5/30/11.

Pre- Kindergarten Class: Open to families with children who are 4 by 11/30/11.

AM Transitional Kindergarten: Open to families with children who are 5 by 3/1/11

Kindergarten: Open to families with children who are 5 by 8/31/11.

### Student/Teacher Visits/Conferences

Children and their teachers meet prior to the beginning of the school year. This is a time for the child and teacher to begin to get acquainted, and is done in the child's home or in the classroom. A short visit eases the adjustment to school. Parent conferences are held at least once a year. Families are encouraged to raise concerns and work with their teacher to find solutions and incorporate the child's needs into classroom practice. Additional conferences are held when requested or needed.

### Arrival and Sign-In Procedures

1. Kindergarten starts at 9:00 am and ends at 2:00pm. Kindergarten will have an early release on Fridays at noon. AM Three starts at 9:00 am and ends at 11:30 am. AM Pre-K starts at 9:00 am and ends at noon. Transitional Kindergarten begins at 9:00 am and ends at noon. Afternoon preschool starts at 12:30 pm. and ends at 3:30 pm.

2. The staff arrives 30 to 60 minutes before school to set up activities and equipment so they will be ready when children arrive at the start of class. When you and your child arrive early, teachers cannot adequately prepare for the day. If you must arrive early, or happen to occasionally, we would appreciate it if you would supervise your children in a quiet, out-of-the-way place. You may want to bring a favorite book or toy to share. Children are not allowed on the play yards while waiting for health checks.
3. Health checks are the first happening of the day. If your child does not pass the health check, he or she will be sent home with parent or driver. If child is healthy, then he or she may be signed in.
4. Sign-in sheets are located in the classrooms. Arizona State Law requires that all children must be signed in when they arrive and signed out when they leave. These sign in sheets are also used to call roll in the event of a fire or fire drill. It is very important that this policy is followed at all times. You must sign, in ink, your full signature.
5. After signing in, assist children in putting away backpacks, finding nametags and an activity to start off the class. Tell your child good-bye before you leave and what time you will return to pick him or her up.
6. Before and after school is not the time for parent/teacher discussions. However, the staff does want to talk to you. So, please call and set up an appointment or drop a note to the teacher via the communications box in the classroom.
7. Be sure to check classroom bulletin boards, and your child's file folder for important notices. A daily time schedule, snack list, class roster and weekly lesson plans will be posted for parents' observations on the teacher's bulletin board.
8. Promptness in picking up your child at the end of class is required. If a student is picked up late, there will be a \$10.00 charge for each 15 minutes of late time.
9. Desert Sun's policy is that families should end of class. Desert Sun does not have staff available to supervise children outside of school-sponsored activities. Therefore, children are not allowed on school grounds before and after class or on weekends unless it is expressly permitted as a school-sponsored activity.
10. Children are not allowed to play in the grass area west of the playground fence or the parking lot *at any time*. For the safety of the children, we ask that parents not visit in the parking lot or the grass area west of the fence line.

## EDUCATIONAL & LIBRARY SERVICES

### Evaluation and Developmental Screening

Parents are provided information about their child's development and learning, either verbally or written, on at least a quarterly basis, with written reports twice a year.

#### Evaluation/Assessment

The purposes and uses of Desert Sun's student evaluation and assessment include:

- Describing child's learning and developmental progress
- Communicating with families
- Identifying child's interests and needs
- Referral for diagnostic screening and assessment when indicated
- Improving curriculum and adapting teaching environment and teaching practices
- Planning program improvements

Desert Sun's assessment procedure:

- Teachers perform assessments during regular class time during normal class activities
- Assessments will occur throughout the entire school year
- All records are confidential and available to staff and parents only. Student records may be shared with other providers and agencies with written consent from the family.
- Assessment and screening records are located in the student file in the school office and are available to staff and parents upon request.
- Reasons for access to student files include review of information, monitoring student progress, communication with parents, planning program improvements.

- Families may be involved in planning and implementing assessments
- Results of assessments are shared with parents during Parent/Teacher conferences or when needed

#### Developmental Screening

Developmental screening is offered and administered by trained professionals, using a reliable and age-appropriate instrument. Screening is performed in the areas of motor, concept, and language skills. The primary use of the screening is to assess for readiness, discover potential learning problems, and indicate potential in young children. Desert Sun provides this service to students who are four years of age and above. Parents are notified in advance of the screening date and time. Developmental screening is a service to families and is optional. Please inform administration if you do not want your child to be screened. Results of the screening are shared in a parent/teacher conference. Staff will use the results of screening and classroom observation to help families make decisions about services their child may need. Referral for diagnostic testing will be suggested when indicated and families will be assisted to obtain services.

### Library

A parent library of child development books and a wide selection of children's books are available for check out. Special bibliographies and a card file have been developed to assist parents with book selections for their children. Adult educational books are also available for loan to member families. These child development books are supplemented with articles and pamphlets that may also be checked out.