



DESERT SUN CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER
FAMILY HANDBOOK

1512 West Elliot Road
Chandler, Arizona 85224
(480) 831-1718

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.

Non-profit Corporation

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 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.

Our Philosophy

The philosophy behind our curriculum is that children learn best by doing. Learning 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 using all five senses.

Brain research shows that 90% of a child's brain development happens by the age of five. The first five years are the most critical years in the development of a child's brain. During these years, children begin to develop cognitive, social, emotional, and language skills and they start to relate and interact with the world.

Curriculum

The most important goals of our curriculum are for children to get along well with others and become enthusiastic learners. We want children to become independent, self-confident, curious learners who can work well with others. We are teaching them how to learn, not just in preschool and kindergarten, but all throughout their lives. We do this by creating purposeful and productive play

experiences to help them grow in all areas including:

- Social/Emotional
- Physical
- Cognitive
- Language

Preschool and Toddler Classes:

Desert Sun follows the Arizona Department of Education's Infant/Toddler and Early Childhood Learning Standards. These standards align with the Arizona Department of Education's Common Core Standards.

Desert Sun uses a Reggio Emilia Inspired curriculum. Conscious Discipline is used to guide a positive discipline program and support social/emotional development. Desert Sun aligns with the Arizona State Early Childhood Standards.

The assessment methods used in our preschool classrooms are observation, the Creative Curriculum Development Continuum. Other assessments may be used if needed.

Kindergarten:

Kindergarten follows the Arizona Department of Education's Kindergarten Standards which include the Common Core.

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 a 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.

Student placement

The director will make the final decision on classroom placement. We determine placement by age, boy/girl ratio, and placement from the previous school year. We will accept requests, but will never guarantee a specific teacher, classroom, or friend student placement.

Discipline

All actions of Lead Teachers and Aides are founded on 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 in acquiring 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. Staff will never use physical punishment, psychological abuse, or coercion when disciplining a child. For example, there will be no physical punishment such as shaking, hitting, spanking, slapping, jerking, squeezing, pinching, pulling arms, hair, or ears. There will be no psychological punishment such as shaming, name-calling, ridiculing, humiliating, cursing, threatening, frightening, or withholding affection. There will be no coercion such as rough handling, forcing a child to sit down or stay down,

or physically forcing a child to perform an action, except when restraint is necessary to protect the child or other children from harm. We use all discipline opportunities to teach children self-regulation skills. Children may be removed from the classroom for support and an opportunity to learn self-control techniques.

History and Background

Desert Sun Child Development Center has been serving East Valley families since 1978. It was started by Peg Brokaw, who had been a teacher in the Child Development Laboratory at Arizona State University. The school rented various locations until the spring of 1996, when the school purchased the property at 1512 West Elliot Road in Chandler, Arizona.

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 to meet state licensing, city code, and school use requirements.

Staff

All staff members are highly trained professional teachers who adhere to Desert Sun's philosophies and programs. All staff members are fingerprinted and background checked. Children are always in the presence of a staff member during school hours. Other support staff and all volunteers must be with and supervised by regularly scheduled teaching staff at all times.

Administration

Trisha Lucas is the school's Educational Director. She is a graduate of Arizona State University with a degree in Family Resource and Human Development. She has worked as an educator for over twenty-five years and has been at Desert Sun for over twenty-eight years. She has taught Toddlers through Transitional Kindergarten. Trisha served on the Arizona Department of Education's Early Learning Standards Board. The goal of the Board was to revise the Early Learning Standard. Trisha is available to families for parenting support and guidance.

Jennifer Conley is the Assistant Director and Student Specialist. Jenn has a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education and Special Education. Jenn has taught in the Mesa Public School, China, and has been at Desert Sun for more than 2004 years. Jenn has an incredible ability to connect with students and their parents.

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.

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

Suzanne Scripture has her Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from Arizona State University. Suzanne has been at Desert Sun as a Parent since 2015. Now that all her kids have graduated Desert Sun, she is excited to join the Desert Sun Staff! She has worked with children and families for the past 25 years and in her free time she likes to spend time with her family, read, and do puzzles.

The members of the 2024/2025 Board of Directors are:

Regina Aldridge
Amanda Buckwalter
Linda and Charlie Bueker
Kristin Cox
Trisha Lucas
Thomas Femiani
Barbie Formichella (Vice-President)
Lisa Garcia (President)
Kayli Lang
Cara Walsh-Meaker
Laura Meyer
Amanda Pechtl
Tim Scripture
Laura and Sully Sullivan
Sarah Tanner
Cassie Wolsink

The Board of Directors can be contacted at boardpresident@dscdc.org.

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. 18th 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 includes incidents occurring in the building or on the grounds and parking lot.

Inspection and Financial Reports

Upon request, parents may view all fire, health, licensing, and financial reports available onsite in the school office.

Hours of Operation

During the regular school year, the office is open Mon. through Thursday from 8:30 am to 1:30 pm and on Fridays from 8:30 am to 11:30 pm.

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.

Confidentiality

Student records are confidential and are only available to parents or legal guardians, regulatory authorities, and school personnel that have been given consent from the parents or legal guardians.

Grievance Procedure

Desert Sun has an open-door policy and wants to work as partners with parents to resolve any grievance. To share a concern or grievance, please follow these guidelines to ensure clear communication:

1. Speak to the teacher or director about your concern. Please avoid grouping together with parents to discuss situations on campus. This can be destructive to our community.
2. Desert Sun's Board of Directors has an email address that is viewed only by a Board member and is confidential. You may contact the Board at boardpresident@dscdc.org if you feel your concern has not been addressed or resolved.

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

Siblings and visitors are welcome to visit the classroom with parents but are not allowed to stay in the classroom unless they are registered in the school and ratio are within school guidelines. State licensing only allows a certain number of children in the classroom. Desert Sun's policy is to maintain the same student-teacher ratio both inside and outside the classroom. We are a family-oriented school and we allow teachers to bring their own healthy children to assist the classes as needed.

Birthdays

Birthdays may be celebrated with special snacks. No foods prepared at home may be served. Children are encouraged to bring their favorite healthy foods, which may not be sweets such as cookies or cakes. 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 birthday invitations unless everyone in the class is invited. 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.

Diapering

No diapering is allowed at any time in the facility. Desert Sun is not licensed for daycare of infants or toddlers, so it does not have an appropriate area for diapering children. All diapering must be done in a member's family's car. If a student has a soiled diaper during school, the director's will support the child in changing or the parent will be phoned and asked to come and change the child.

Restrooms

Children's restrooms are coed. The main restroom doors are to be opened when children are using the facilities. Please close the doors when done. This area is heated and cooled. Children must be accompanied to the bathroom by a fingerprinted, background-checked staff member. If the child has an accident someone from administration will help assist the child. If administration is unable to help the child a parent will be phoned. Teachers will let you know at pick up if your child had an accident.

Field Trips

Each class may plan trips away from the classroom as part of the ongoing 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 which are often messy. Therefore, children and parents are encouraged to come to school in "old" clothes appropriate for 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 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.

Cell Phone/Social Media Policy

1. The use of cell phones is discouraged at Desert Sun. When entering campus please turn off cell phones.
2. To protect children's safety and privacy, we ask that parents and visitors refrain from posting any child's picture on a social media website without explicit permission from that child's family. No videotaping is allowed at the school.
3. Smart phones should only be used in the classroom for photos that do not conflict with policy Number 2.

Teacher/Child Ratio

3-Year-Old Class	1/8
Pre-Kindergarten Class	1/9
Kindergarten	1/11

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 Directors 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. Staff and parents may at some point find that Desert Sun is not able to support the child or meet their developmental needs. We will support parents with finding a program that would meet their child's developmental needs to the best of our ability.

Addressing Developmental Differences

All students will receive a 45-day developmental screening administered by their teacher. Parents will be informed if there are any areas of concern. If you have any questions about your child's development and/or the instrument itself, please contact the student specialist or director. The lead teacher, student specialist, and director will have access to the developmental screening information. This will help make sure our program meets the child's needs in the school environment successfully, and/or make suggestions for accommodations and/or services that might be necessary to enhance the child's development. Some children need additional support and guidance to succeed in school and life. Underlying behavior issues can be complex in the developing child. Considerable support, openness, and expertise are required to address these, and

sometimes only incremental change can be expected.

The student specialist will have access to any information related to a child's development, special needs, assessments, or educational history so they can facilitate the child's placement and progress in the program. If a problem exists, the parents are asked to work with the teacher and the student specialist to develop a plan to solve the problem. Occasionally, a child's unsafe behavior necessitates that a parent is called during school hours to address an issue. Repeated unsafe or disruptive behavior may necessitate that the child leaves school for the day. If your child displays concerning behaviors, you will be notified and a conference will be requested with the classroom teacher and perhaps one of the school directors. Depending on the observed behaviors, a plan will be put in order which may include some or all of the following: a behavior plan, a developmental evaluation, consultation with a developmental specialist or therapist, and a timeline for reaching target goals. It is done in order to support the child and their special needs and to preserve a harmonious atmosphere in the classroom. Each child has important talents and qualities that contribute to the success and positive development of other children and the community. We intend to be inclusive with our student population, honoring diverse needs, while offering a healthy, positive learning environment. We give our best to children daily and expect parents to do the same. There will be situations where we will expect extra support from parents to help a child succeed. We are willing to go a long way with a family if we know that our work at school is being supported at home. Although we work hard to help every child succeed at our school, some students may need an alternative setting. If, after intervention by the school and parents, a child's problematic behaviors persist, it may be in the child's best interest to be placed elsewhere. Programs with additional services may be required to meet the child's needs

more successfully. Such decisions will be made by the classroom teacher and the school directors. Desert Sun believes strongly in the importance of the child's social development and the pervasive effects of positive family interactions. We hope by

working together we can help children become independent, self-confident, curious learners who can work well with others.

MEMBERSHIP, REGISTRATION AND TUITION

Membership: Membership is required of all families enrolling in the 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 nonmember 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

Tuition:

Tuition is based on YEARLY rate (not how many weeks of classes are offered each month). For your convenience the yearly tuition is broken up into monthly payments. Tuition for all classes is due on the first of each month. Tuition is due regardless of attendance. All monthly tuition payments received five working days after the 1st of each month are to include a late fee of \$25.00. An additional \$10.00 will be charged for each week the tuition is late. Students will be withdrawn from the school if tuition is more than 30 days late. We require 30 days written notice for a student leaving the program. Tuition will be prorated for the remainder of their last month. 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 a \$15.00 fee for the returned check. For additional children in your family there is a 10% reduction in tuition. This reduction is applied to the lowest tuition. After school care is not available. If a student is picked up late, there will be a \$10.00 charge for each 15 minutes of late time.

All fees paid at registration are NON-REFUNDABLE and NON-TRANSFERABLE. If a minimum enrollment is not met, the class will not be offered and all fees will be refunded.

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. Parents are 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 911, 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. Floor coverings are secured to prevent slipping and falling. No baby walkers are allowed.

Fire drills are practiced on a monthly basis. Children will participate in the drills. Parents will be notified when the drill has taken place. These drills are required to be unannounced prior to drill. Teachers will do an all staff emergency drill and lock down twice a year. Children will not participate in these drills.

We have walls and fences around the school property. Desert Sun also has cameras positioned around the school. The front gate access has a locked combination lock on it that is only given to families enrolled and staff. To access the code, contact the office.

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 the child's immunization record must be on file. In order to be exempt from immunizations, an exemption form is available in the school office and must be kept in the student file. If your child is not immunized, and there is an occurrence of a vaccine preventable disease at the school, the family will be notified and excluded from the school for a period of time determined by the state health department.

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 - Good Health Guidelines

We know that a child's illness is a difficult time. Because it is frustrating to rearrange schedules to provide care for a sick child at home, we do our best to help eliminate these concerns as much as we are able. Young children are susceptible to colds, flu's and other diseases and the best way to prevent illness is to prevent exposure. This requires that our classrooms have the healthiest environment possible. We ask parents to assist by making sure their child(ren) are symptom free of fever, diarrhea, questionable rash, any communicable disease, vomiting, discharge in or around the eyes, green or yellow runny nose, and/or excessive coughing. Children will not be allowed in a classroom if they are exhibiting any of the above symptoms at morning greeting. Parents will be notified promptly if your child becomes ill while at school. We also ask that adults adhere to these same guidelines. As with any situation, we realize there may be exceptions. If your child

suffers from a chronic condition such as hay fever, allergies, or any other recurring symptoms, please let us know.

Reporting an Absence

If your child is unable to attend school, please call the Desert Sun office to report the absence. Children should be symptom free for 24 hours, without any medication before returning to school. 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

The building and grounds 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 heat 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 a 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 an adult may go out the gate and walk around to retrieve it.
- Sand needs to stay in the sandbox.

Supervision

Teachers supervise children by keeping them in sight. Supervision for short intervals by sound is permissible as long the children are in a safe environment and as long as teachers frequently check on children who are out of sight.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Any staff member accused of abusing or neglecting a child in the program will be put on suspension during an investigative period. The staff member's employment will be terminated with sufficient proof of guilt. The investigation

will be confidential for the protection of the employee and the child involved. Any suspicion of child neglect should be reported to the school director, a mandated reporter. The suspected abuse will be documented and reported to Child Protective Services.

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.

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. The code is accessible by calling the office.

Pesticide Application

At least 72 hours' notification will be given prior to pesticide application by posting signs at the school entrance and at each classroom door. The notice will identify the application area and the type and quantity of chemical applied.

Safety

Desert Sun's policy is that families should leave at the 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.

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.

Transportation Policy

Students need to be signed in and out of school each day. Children will not be released to anyone without written authorization from the parent or legal guardian. Parents are asked to inform the school office if there are any special circumstances involving picking up or transporting the student. Students will not be released to any person appearing to be under the influence of alcohol or other substances.

Parking Lot Safety

Please park in designated parking spots. For the safety of our families, we discourage leaving your car idling in the parking lot, leaving children unattended in the car, and leaving purses or valuables in your vehicle.

Security Cameras

Security cameras are located on the school campus with a monitor located in the school office to assist in maintaining a secure environment.

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 Visitors 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.

Volunteers

Parents are welcome to participate in the classroom with their child. 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. There are a variety of volunteer opportunities available during the school year, such as helping with a school event, making playdough, building repair and maintenance, parent workday, etc.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Birthday Celebration

This event is usually 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. This is the best way of keeping our building and equipment in repair and our yard maintained. We encourage all families to help.

Parent Seminars

Parent Seminars are offered several times each school year on a signup basis. Topics might include: child development, educational goals, assessment, cognitive development, self esteem, discipline, and communication. 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, Potluck Picnics in September and May, and Fall Festival in November.

Safety

Please be aware that parents are responsible for their own children at all special events. Staff members are not available to supervise during events.

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.

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 a curriculum that follows the Arizona Department of Education's standards. The unique environment also includes a hands-on developmental curriculum that allows the children to explore and nurture their creative abilities. Desert Sun's kindergarten will help support a smooth transition to further learning.

Student/Teacher Visits/Conferences

Children in preschool and kindergarten meet with their teacher 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 twice 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.

EDUCATIONAL & LIBRARY SERVICES

Evaluation and Developmental Screening

Preschool and kindergarten 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 and/or the Directors 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 written assessments are shared with parents during Parent/Teacher conferences in October and February, or when needed.
- The Geselle developmental screening is available to preschool and kindergarten students. The screenings are performed by the Director, who has attended Giselle training. If needed, the staff will provide referral information to the family.

Library

A library of child development books and a wide selection of children's books are available for checkout. Supplemental articles and pamphlets are also available for checkout. Please check in the school office for more information.