

## WELCOME PACKET

Dear Parents,

This Welcome Packet serves as our “Statement of Services” as required by the Arizona Department of Health Services. The policies and procedures of the school are listed below. Please read this packet thoroughly and feel free to ask our Director or Administrator any questions.

Palm Valley Montessori School is a state licensed operation regulated by the Office of Child Care Licensure (OCCL) through the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS). The office is located at 150 North 18th Avenue, 4th floor, Phoenix, AZ 85020. The OCCL phone number is (602) 364-2539. ADHS inspection reports are available upon request.

All staff members at Palm Valley Montessori School are registered with the OCCL. All staff members have passed a background check and carry a fingerprint clearance card. All staff members are also CPR and first aid certified. Our director and lead teachers each possess Montessori primary teaching certification, at least three years teaching experience in the Montessori classroom, and participate in continuing education through the Association Montessori Internationale ([www.montessori-ami.org](http://www.montessori-ami.org)) or American Montessori Society ([www.amshq.org](http://www.amshq.org)).

Regards,

*Eva Foster*

Eva Foster  
Director

## Description of Services

Palm Valley Montessori School offers exceptional primary and lower elementary Montessori programs. The curriculum is genuine Montessori instruction as certified by the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI). The Association Montessori Internationale was established in 1929 by Dr. Maria Montessori to “maintain, propagate, and further her ideas and principles for the full development of the human being.” By following the principles of natural human development, the Montessori approach to education aids self-discovery and learning in a prepared environment.

## Description of Programs

Palm Valley Montessori School offers a genuine Montessori education. The curriculum is diverse and integrated. The Montessori method of instruction is truly a hands-on approach to learning where the student is fully engaged. Each skill or concept is introduced with an accompanying material specifically designed to guide the child to discovery and mastery.

The following three program schedules are offered:

Half Day AM	8:15 AM - 12:15 PM
Full Day	8:30 AM - 3:00 PM
Extended Day	7:30 AM - 5:30 PM

The **four foundations** of any Montessori classroom are:

- Practical Life*** The lessons in this category enable the child to care for himself and his environment. They are also known as the independence lessons. From these simple tasks, the young child builds concentration, self-confidence, motor skills, and autonomy. Exercises in this category include washing a table, arranging flowers, preparing vegetables, lacing a shoe, setting a table, and greeting guests. Once the child has mastered these activities he is ready to advance to the more complex lessons of language and mathematics.
- Sensorial*** All five senses are engaged in Montessori education. Dr. Montessori noted that "development of the senses precedes that of superior intellectual activity." The sensorial materials train children to discriminate the differences in forms, colors, textures and smells. The child refines the use of his senses and develops critical thinking, concentration, and sequencing skills. Some examples of the sensorial lessons include the pink tower, baric tablets, tasting jars, constructive triangles, and superimposed geometric figures.
- Language*** Children are capable of using sounds to “build” words before they can physically write. Therefore, Montessori classrooms use a moveable alphabet so the child can literally combine the sounds to form words and sentences. Reading is taught by guiding the child to discover that sounds make words and those sounds have symbols. The Montessori environment emphasizes the importance of vocabulary with stories, songs, poems, plays, and conversation. The child learns not only to read and write, but to fully express himself through language. Activities in language include sound games, sandpaper letters, phonograms, logical adverb game, and simple sentences with extensions, attributes, and appositions.

### ***Mathematics***

A love of mathematics will develop naturally if the young child is allowed to discover mathematic truths in the concrete and then apply those truths to the abstract. First, the child learns the symbol and the quantity for numbers. Next, mathematical processes are taught using the decimal system. Some examples of Montessori mathematics lessons include number rods and cards, formation of complex numbers with beads and cards, dynamic multiplication, linear counting, long division with boards and racks, and introduction to fractions.

The Montessori child also receives exposure in the Arts, Sciences, and Culture. Geography, history, botany, zoology, art, and music are all integral parts of the curriculum. The students study an artist and a composer of the month.

Diversity is treasured in the Montessori classroom. Foods, music, dress, language, art, and celebrations from cultures beyond our modern Western world are introduced to students so they are prepared to be global citizens. Grace and courtesy, peace education, character development, gardening and outdoor activities, and movement education are also stressed in the Montessori primary environment. Children at this level of development are particularly adept to absorb these lessons. Full and extended day students also benefit from weekly music, art, and yoga classes and bi-weekly Spanish instruction.

## **Enrollment Procedure**

The parents and child will visit the school for an interview with the director and/or administrator, by appointment. During this time, the program is explained to the parents and questions are asked and answered regarding policies, schedules, tuition, staff qualifications, discipline, etc.

The parents may then be invited to submit an Application Packet to Palm Valley Montessori School. The completed Application Packet should include:

- Application Form for New Student Enrollment
- General Release Form
- Parental Agreement
- Financial Agreement
- Emergency Information and Immunization Record Card
- Copy of the Child's Birth Certificate
- Check for the Application Fee

Upon receipt of all of the above, the parents will receive a Welcome Packet and a start date will be selected. If no spaces are available in the school, the child may be placed on a waiting list. No guarantees are made for desired placement, which is dependent on space available. Application fees are not refundable.

## Admission Requirements

Children may be enrolled at any time during the school year. The child should be between 2-1/2 and 3-1/2 years of age, or have previous Montessori experience. Palm Valley Montessori School strongly endorses a three-year program to provide maximum advantage of the Montessori method, including the kindergarten year. A two-year program is the minimum recommended enrollment. Children should be completely toilet trained. Manageable behavior and obedience are expected. The child should be able to follow simple directions, such as “Put the puzzle on the shelf and come sit down.”

## Disenrollment Procedure

Children will be admitted on the basis of a pre-enrollment interview and application packet. The school reserves the right to discharge, at any time, any child whose presence, in the opinion of the school, is detrimental to the program of the school and who is not benefiting from his instruction.

Charges will continue until a child is officially withdrawn. A written two-week notice shall be provided prior to withdrawal.

## Hours of Operation

Our facility is open from 7:30 AM - 5:30 PM, Monday thru Friday. However, we will be closed to observe the following holidays or breaks:

- Labor Day
- One week Fall Break
- Thanksgiving (Thursday and Friday)
- Two week Winter Break
- One week Spring Break
- Memorial Day
- Fourth of July
- Two week Summer Break

A current school year calendar is included in this packet or online at [www.palmvalleymontessori.com](http://www.palmvalleymontessori.com).

## Transportation and Field Trips

Palm Valley Montessori School does not provide transportation to students or take field trips. Instead, we bring special experiences to our school. Reptile experts, jugglers, dentists, musicians, zookeepers, dancers, and other guests share with the children throughout the year.

## Responsibilities and Participation of Parents in Facility Activities

Parents are invited and encouraged to participate in events and celebrations throughout the school year. Please refer to the school calendar for event dates.

## Admission and Release Requirements

Parents must accompany their child into Palm Valley Montessori School and sign the child in and out at the front desk. Please sign your first and last name next to your child's name.

No individual may pick up a child without prior authorization and photo identification. A fee of \$1.00 per minute per child will be charged for any child left after closing time at 5:30pm. If we have not been able to reach a parent, legal guardian, or emergency contact after one hour, we will be forced to contact legal authorities.

## Payment Requirements

Tuition rates as of August 1, 2010:

Half Day AM	8:15 AM - 12:15 PM	\$475
Full Day	8:30 AM - 3:00 PM	\$625
Extended Day	7:30 AM - 5:30 PM	\$725

1. Parents understand all tuition fees are due in advance. Parents agree to pay the tuition fee according to the following arrangement: Monthly payment, due on the first school day of each month or pre-payment for the entire school semester due at the start of the semester. A 10% discount will be given to pre-paying families.
2. Parents understand that there will be a charge of \$25.00 on any check returned to Palm Valley Montessori School by the bank. Parents understand Palm Valley Montessori School reserves the right to require guaranteed funds; cash or money order.
3. Parents understand that expenses continue whether or not a child is present at school each day. Parents will be charged according to the fee schedule even if the child is absent. No tuition refund will be made in the case of absence for illness, vacation, or any other reason, as long as a place is being held for the child. Charges will continue until the child is officially withdrawn. A two-week notice will be provided prior to withdrawal.
4. Parents understand balances due must be paid before evaluations can be released.
5. Parents understand that in the event payment has not been received by the office within ten (10) days after the due date, the student(s) may be removed from Palm Valley Montessori School.
6. In the event that the account should remain delinquent after the said time in item #5 and upon the discretion of Palm Valley Montessori School, our account may be turned over to a professional agency for collection.

## Discipline Guidelines

Discipline in the Montessori classroom is built on a balanced foundation of freedom and structure. The words “freedom” and “structure” may sound like opposites, but the Montessori community does not hold them as such.

Just as citizens of the United States enjoy many freedoms, we are limited by how our actions affect other citizens. There are rules, written and unwritten, about how we are to behave and, for the most part, these limits are respected. When the young child enters the prepared environment of the Montessori classroom, he is naturally drawn to the experience. He wishes to belong and assimilates quickly. Children experience freedom of movement and freedom of choice in the Montessori environment. Every parent knows a child cannot be forced to do anything. Instead, the Montessori teacher guides the child to work and group participation by winning his affection and interest. Most of the time, the children are working independently on various tasks. Competition is minimized and interests are aroused. As the child develops self-discipline he is given more freedom and responsibility in the classroom community. This is a natural progression that he wills for himself.

If the child is misbehaving or distracting others, he will be redirected. The teacher will attempt to delight his senses and engage him in another activity. If the child continues to misbehave and distract then he is removed from the group of children. In the Montessori environment, nothing is so upsetting to the child as isolation and lost opportunity.

## Illness Policy and Medication Procedures

Ill children will not be admitted to school. If your child should become ill while in our care, we will attend to his needs until a parent can pick up. If your child has an illness please notify us. We are required to report any contagious illness to the Arizona Department of Health Services and to have a communicable illness record on file. Do not bring your child to school with the following symptoms:

- Fever
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Rash
- Infectious disease

Children may return to school after being symptom-free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducers. Medications will not be administered to children.

## Emergency Procedures

If an emergency arises, we will immediately contact the parents. If parents cannot be reached, we will then phone the emergency contact on the child’s file. If the child requires immediate medical attention, Palm Valley Montessori School will not hesitate to call 911 and the child will be taken to the nearest medical facility.

In the case of minor injuries or accidents, parents will be notified of the incident at the end of the school day.

## Notification Procedures for Pesticides

A document will be posted in the school lobby notifying parents that a pesticide will be applied on the facility's premises at least 48 hours before application

## Liability Insurance

Palm Valley Montessori School's liability insurance policy covers only students enrolled at the facility and not other children. Therefore, if parents bring to school children other than those enrolled and they should sustain injuries on said premises, they hereby release and absolve Palm Valley Montessori School completely and totally from all responsibility or blame for any and all such injuries and subsequent consequences thereof. The above also pertains to any animals brought onto the premises. A copy of the Liability Insurance policy is available for review on the facility premises.

## A few words about...

**lunches.** At Palm Valley Montessori School lunch is more than a time to eat. Lunchtime is a dining experience complete with social graces, good conversation, and dinnerware. The children set the tables with linens, plates, glasses, silverware, napkins, and flowers. The children use their best manners and coordination. We provide juice and water for the children to pour into their glasses so there is no need to pack juice boxes. We ask that you please assist us in this learning experience by packing healthy lunches for your child. Lunchboxes are refrigerated until lunch and a microwave is available for warm-ups.

**snack.** Occasionally you will be asked to provide snack for the class. Please bring a healthy "growing" food. Fresh fruit and vegetables are wonderful snacks. The children are sometimes served "keeping" foods like teddy grahams, cheerios, and goldfish crackers, but we really try to keep these snacks to a minimum. Real foods are always best! Please do not bring sugar snacks or candy. Please don't feel you need to prepare the snack either. Bring in a bag of apples and the children will delight in cutting their own snack.

**items from home.** We understand many children like to carry familiar items with them, but please leave personal items at home. On their snack day, your child will have an opportunity to share an item with the class. This item should be something meaningful to the child. Cultural artifacts, something the child made, an item from nature, or a photograph are all wonderful share objects. Please do not bring toys to share. Children do not need backpacks for school.

**nap items.** If your child will be napping at Palm Valley Montessori School, please bring a small pillow and blanket. Your child may also bring a "lovey" for nap. Children have individual sleeping cots that are not shared. We want to protect your child's health! Your child will have an assigned sleeping cot covered with a fitted sheet. At the end of the week (each Friday) we will send the pillow and blanket back home for laundering, sanitize the sleeping cot, and wash the fitted sheet.

**birthdays.** We love to celebrate children's birthdays, but in the Montessori classroom we do not celebrate with goodies, cakes, prizes, etc. Instead, the birthday child carries the globe around the birthday mat "sun" symbolizing their own journey. Parents are welcome to attend the ceremony or to send in pictures and short stories to share with the class. We share the child's experiences and

accomplishments (visiting the Grand Canyon, getting a dog, learning to swim). We ask what they would like to do in the next year of life. Birthdays are a time for reflection and dreaming. If your family would like to donate a book to the Palm Valley Montessori School library, in honor of the occasion, please write your child's name and birthday message inside. This is a wonderful way for the young child to contribute to the classroom community and remember his special day.

**extra clothes.** Although all our students are potty trained, accidents do happen. Please supply us with a complete change of clothes for your child.

**pick-up and drop-off.** Please be mentally and emotionally present when picking-up and dropping-off your child. Cell phone conversations should be finished up outside. During this transition period, your child deserves your full attention.

## What to Bring the First Day

- Complete change of clothes
- Two packages of colored pencils
- Two boxes of Kleenex
- Two packages of glue sticks
- Healthy lunch in a lunch box
- Small pillow and blanket (if napping)