

## 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 program schedules are offered:

Preschool Academic Half Day	8:30 AM - 12:15 PM
Preschool Academic Full Day	8:15 AM - 3:15 PM
Kindergarten Academic Full Day	8:15 AM - 3:15 PM
Elementary Academic Full Day	8:15 AM - 3:15 PM
If your academic full day child will need care before 8:15am and/or after 3:15pm, extended care is billed at an additional \$100 - \$150 per child per month.	7:30 AM - 5:00 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.

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 environment. Children at this level of development are particularly adept to absorb these lessons.

## **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, 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 and readiness for the Montessori program. 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. 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.

## Absenteeism and Tardiness Policy

Palm Valley Montessori School strives to be accommodating and flexible whenever possible. However, certain procedures must be followed to allow for the learning environment to function properly. This is for your own child's benefit as well as the other children and families in our community. We ask that you respect the efforts of our school to provide a well-rounded experience and arrive on time and attend school with regularity. All children should arrive no later than 8:30am.

## Hours of Operation

Our facility is open from 7:30 AM - 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday. However, we will be closed to observe the following holidays or breaks:

- Labor Day
- One week Early Fall Break
- One week Late Fall Break
- Two week Winter Break
- Civil Rights Day
- Presidents' Day
- One week Early Spring Break
- One week Late Spring Break
- Memorial Day
- Six week Summer Break

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

## Transportation and Field Trips (for Primary students)

Palm Valley Montessori School does not provide transportation to preschool 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.

## **Transportation and Field Trips (for Elementary students)**

All students must have a Parent Permission Form completed prior to the field trip. We will not be making contact with parents to remind them of the day of the field trip.

Lunch details will be communicated in advance of the trip depending on the details of the particular field trip. Information regarding lunches will be listed on the Parent Permission Form.

At the discretion of the school, a bus may be rented for transportation to and from the school. Any rented vehicle will be properly licensed and insured for said purpose. Students riding the bus to a field trip must ride both ways to and from the school.

If a bus is not rented, parents must transport their own child(ren) both to and from the field trip site. Students who will be riding the bus (and will not have a parent with them) will be signed out (and back in, if necessary) by a chaperoning Lead Teacher. Parents will grant permission for the Lead Teacher to sign their child in and out for the day of field trip in the Parent Permission Form. If a parent will be accompanying the student, the parent will sign the student in and out.

Students being chaperoned by the school will be ready for pickup either at their regular scheduled pickup time or, if different, at a time indicated on the Parent Permission Form.

Any student with a medical condition that could cause a potential problem for that child must be accompanied by his/her parent.

## **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 5:00pm. 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 May 1, 2018:

Toddler Half Day	8:30 AM - 12:15 PM	\$675 / month
Toddler Full Day	8:15 AM - 3:15 PM	\$850 / month
Preschool Academic Half Day	8:30 AM - 12:15 PM	\$675 / month
Preschool Academic Full Day	8:15 AM - 3:15 PM	\$775 / month
Kindergarten Academic Full Day	8:15 AM - 3:15 PM	\$1,050 / month
Elementary Academic Full Day	8:15 AM - 3:15 PM	\$625 / month
Extended Care (before 8:15 AM and/or after 3:15 PM)	7:30 AM - 5:00 PM	Toddler: \$950 / month Preschool: \$875 / month Kindergarten: \$1,150 / month Elementary: \$725 / month

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.
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.
7. Academic instruction begins at 8:00am with all Lower Elementary students expected to arrive by 8:15am and all Primary students expected to arrive by 8:30am. Academic instruction ends at 3:00pm. However, it is acceptable to pick-up your full day student anytime between 3:00pm and 3:30pm. Those students enrolled as "full day" must be picked up by 3:30pm or additional charges will accrue. The rate will be \$5 per hour per child for parents picking up after their contracted time. If you require occasional after-school care for your "full day" student, please notify the school in advance so the staff and student know what to expect.

## 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.

## **School Policies**

See separate document or go the school's website under the "Enrollment" page.

## **School Supplies List**

See separate document or go the school's website under the "Enrollment" page.

## **School Calendar**

See separate document or go the school's website.

## A few words about...

**Allergies** - There are several students with food sensitivities and a couple of students with SEVERE and LIFE-THREATENING FOOD ALLERGIES at our school. For this reason, we do not allow any peanut or tree nut foods on the school grounds. The risk of exposure is too great. The staff closely monitors food consumption for these children. Please be mindful of these restrictions when packing your child's lunch, providing snack for the class, or preparing a potluck dish. For example, peanut butter, Nutella, and trail mix are potentially life-threatening foods in our school environment. If you are participating in a school function which includes food, such as International Day or Peace Day, do not give food to any student but your own.

**Lunches** - All students will need to bring a packed lunch from home. All lunches will be refrigerated, and food can be reheated for students. Please package food items requiring reheating in microwave-safe storage (i.e. glass instead of plastic containers). We ask that lunchboxes be relatively small in size. Lunchboxes are kept refrigerated in the classrooms and oversized lunchboxes take up too much space.

Lunchboxes should be free of characters (no Spider Man, Barbie, Disney Cars, etc.). For example, a lunchbox with a turtle design is great, but a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle is not acceptable. A horse picture is fine, but My Little Pony is not. Every lunchbox should be clearly labeled with the student's name. At school, we do our best to promote and model healthy eating and good table manners. Please DO NOT SEND junk food or juice boxes in your child's lunch. Please DO NOT send squishy packet foods such as Go-gurt or squeezable apple sauce. Foods packaged in this way discourage the table manners we are working so hard to achieve. Please DO NOT send Lunchable kits, Macaroni and Cheese kits, or packets of noodles. These items take too much time to assemble and/or cook, causing the student to be behind schedule. Foods requiring reheating are fine, but foods requiring cooking are not. The teachers and assistants help the students to unpack their lunches, but our goal at lunch is the same as the rest of the school day in that we try to encourage independence and have the student do as much as he can on his own. Please support us in this way by having your child practice unzipping his own lunchbox, opening his containers, and eating independently and politely.

Students will set their tables with tablecloths, plates, napkins, glasses, and utensils. They will unpack their food on to their plates and place their lunchboxes under their chairs. They will drink water with lunch and practice pouring water from a pitcher into their glass.

Please remember: NO PEANUT or TREE NUT products may be brought to or consumed at school.

**Snack** - Toddler and primary students will be given pre-selected "snack and share" days. On these pre-determined days, toddlers will bring some healthy foods to share with classmates for snack time. Primary students (preschool and kindergarteners) will bring some healthy foods to share with classmates for snack time and also an item for show-and-tell. Students are encouraged to bring foods that they can help prepare: apples to wash and slice, bananas to peel and cut, carrots to wash and peel, cantaloupe to scoop, etc. Toddler students will have a snack day once a month and primary students will have a snack and share day approximately once every two months. The schedules will be available on The Weekly Connection and in the school lobbies.

**Water Bottles** - All students need to bring a water bottle to keep at school. The water bottle will only be filled with water and will be washed once a week. Please ensure the water bottle is character-free and clearly marked with your child's name. The water bottle should be relatively small.

**Items from Home / Show and Tell Items** - 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, a favorite book, something the child made, an item from nature, or a photograph are all wonderful share objects. Please do not bring toys to share, or any item featuring movie or television characters. Children do not need backpacks for school.



**Extra Clothes** - Toddler and primary students should come to school dressed for the work of the day. All toddler and primary students should bring a complete change of clothes on the first day of school. A shirt, shorts, socks, and underwear should be enclosed in a clear zip-lock bag with the child's name clearly marked. These items will remain at school. The clothes are not only for toilet accidents, but are also helpful to have on hand in case of water spills, bloody noses, illness or injury, mud, etc.

**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 goal setting. 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. Due to allergy restrictions and a desire to minimize treats, we ask that parents **DO NOT** celebrate your child's birthday at school with food. Sharing baby photos or making a poster board presentation about your child's year are fun ways to celebrate a birthday in the classroom. Please schedule a birthday celebration in your child's classroom by contacting our administrator at [Eva.Foster@PalmValleyMontessori.com](mailto:Eva.Foster@PalmValleyMontessori.com) or 623-986-9516.

**Dress Code** - It is our goal to provide the best possible learning environment for our students. The Montessori classroom is referred to as "the prepared environment" because teachers are meticulous in their selection and presentation materials and design of space. Everything has a place and a purpose. Dress also should serve as an aid to the child's safety and development and not be a distraction to learning. However, uniforms are not desirable as they take away from our individuality and cultural expressions. At this age, we want children to practice making appropriate choices within a reasonable framework. In an effort to shield our students from distraction and commercialism, Palm Valley Montessori School adheres to the following guidelines for dress:

- Sensible play clothes are the best choice for school. Please have your child dress as if he were going to the park for the day. While we do teach children to wear aprons, it is not advisable to send children in clothes that cannot get dirty.
- Shoes, clothing, and accessories should not distract your student or others. Light-up shoes, shoes with wheels, noise making watches, slap bracelets, colored hair pieces, etc. are not permitted.
- Hats are permitted for sun protection while playing on the playground or working outdoors. Students are asked to remove hats indoors.
- Do not allow your student to wear excessive jewelry to school. For example, simple earrings are not a problem, but large bracelets and necklaces are distracting to the child and are unsafe on the playground.
- Movie and television characters on clothing encourage distractibility, silly behavior, and inappropriate fantasy play in the classroom. For these reasons, we have imposed a character-free clothing rule. This rule also applies to lunchboxes, water bottles, folders, and other items.
- Please also evaluate whether the image or message on your child's clothes are aggressive, violent, or sassy in nature. For example, "here comes trouble" or "talk to the hand" are not appropriate school messages.
- Logos and advertisements based in reality are fine. For example, wearing a Diamondbacks cap or a Phoenix Zoo is fine.
- Please do not allow your child to put distracting items from home (lip gloss, stuffed animal, action figures, etc.) in their cubby.
- **NO FAKE TATOOS** are to be worn at school.

**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 outside. During this transition period, your child deserves your full attention. When your child is being picked up or dropped off, please do not allow him or her to run around the property. The school's parking lot is a potentially dangerous place and should be treated as such.