

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 staff any questions.

Palm Valley Montessori School is a state-licensed operation regulated by the Bureau of Child Care Licensure (BCCL) through the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS). The office is located at 150 North 18th Avenue, 4th floor, Phoenix, AZ 85020. The BCCL phone number is (602) 364-2539. Facility inspection reports are kept on the premises and are available upon request. Parents may also have access to the areas on facility premises where the parent's enrolled child is receiving childcare services.

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

Regards,

Eva Foster
School 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:

- Academic Half Day 7:30-8:30 AM to 12:15 PM
- Academic Full Day 7:30-8:30 AM to 3:15 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 the 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 movable 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 games, and simple sentences with extensions, attributes, and apposition.

Mathematics

A love of mathematics will develop naturally if the young child is allowed to discover mathematical truths in the concrete and then apply those truths to the abstract. First, the child learns the symbol and the quantity for each of the 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 to 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. Food, 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, 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.

Hours of Operation

Our facility is open from 7:30 AM - 3:30 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
- MLK Civil Rights Day
- Presidents' Day
- One-week Early Spring Break
- One-week Late Spring Break
- Memorial Day
- Summer Break

A current school year calendar is available online at www.palmvalleymontessori.com.

Daily Schedule

- 07:30 AM - 08:30 AM School Opens / Student Drop Off
- 08:00 AM - 11:00 AM Morning Work Cycle
- 11:00 AM - 11:30 AM Group Time / Lunch Prep
- 11:30 AM - 12:00 PM Lunch Time
- 12:00 PM - 12:30 PM Outside Play
- 12:30 PM - 03:00 PM Afternoon Work Cycle
- 03:00 PM - 03:30 PM Outside Play / Student Pick Up / School Closes

* The daily schedule may be modified for weather-related issues such as rain or excessive heat. *

August Movement Grace & Courtesy Solar System	February Chinese New Year, Chinese Culture Arizona, Valentine's Day President's Day Groundhog's Day, shadows Dental Health
September Study of Cultures International Children's Day Apples	March Spring, Weather, Wind Irish Culture, St. Patrick's Day Peace Day Amphibians, Frogs
October Fall, Weather Christopher Columbus Bats, Leaves, Spiders, Pumpkins	April Easter, Birds, Eggs, Rabbits Color Mixing Earth Day Science Seeds, Plants
November Leaves, Owls, Squirrels Thanksgiving Native American Cultures	May European Culture Insects, Flowers May Day Mother's Day
December Hibernation Hanukkah Christmas	June Ocean Life US History, Flags (July 4th) Father's Day Summer, Weather
January Maria Montessori Winter, Snow, Polar Regions Martin Luther King	July - No School

Enrollment Procedure

Parents will visit the school for a tour and an interview with the school director and/or school manager by appointment. Children may attend tours. During the tour, the program is explained to the parents, and questions are answered regarding policies, schedules, tuition, staff qualifications, discipline, etc.

Next, the student is welcomed in for an evaluation. Evaluations are scheduled in advance with the school administration. The 4-hour trial period may occur on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays. The parents may then be invited to submit a Student Application Packet to Palm Valley Montessori School.

The completed Student 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, enrollment will be confirmed and a start date 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 the space available and readiness for the Montessori program. Application fees are non-refundable.

Registration Requirements

Children may be enrolled at any time during the school year. New students should be three (3) years of age. Students four (4) years of age or older may be accepted for enrollment if they are transferring from another quality Montessori program. Student records and references will be required in the case of a transfer.

Students must be fully toilet trained and completely independent in the restroom. Basic obedience and manageable, non-violent behavior is also expected. The child should be able to follow simple directions.

Palm Valley Montessori School strongly endorses a three-year experience in the Primary classroom to provide the maximum benefit of the Montessori method. This includes two years of preschool and the kindergarten year. Graduates of the Primary program may continue in Palm Valley Montessori School's Elementary program.

Absenteeism and Tardiness Policy

Palm Valley Montessori School strives to be accommodating and flexible whenever possible. However, certain procedures must be followed to allow 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 teachers to provide an excellent academic experience and arrive on time and attend school with regularity. All children should arrive no later than 8:30 AM.

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 3:30 PM. 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.

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 them to run around the property. The school's parking lot is a potentially dangerous place and should be treated as such. Children should walk with an adult and carry their own lunch box or water bottle to foster independence. Goodbyes are said in the office and children walk down the hallway into the classroom. Please wait in the office when picking up your child from school. Your child will come to the office either from the classroom or the playground.

Responsibilities and Participation of Parents in Facility Activities

Parents are invited and encouraged to participate in events and celebrations throughout the school year. The school has an active and welcoming Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) for parents who would like to volunteer and participate in school functions. Please refer to the school calendar for event dates.

Transportation and Field Trips

Palm Valley Montessori School does not provide transportation for the Primary 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. Elementary students do attend field trips with their teachers and parent volunteers approximately ten times each school year. All students must have a Parent Permission Form completed prior to the field trip. We will not make 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.

Transportation and Field Trips (continued)

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 on a field trip must ride both ways to and from the school. If a bus is not rented, parents must transport their own children 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 the 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 pick-up either at their regular scheduled pick-up 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 their parent.

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. 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. The removal from the environment is clear communication of the limits/expectations of the classroom and serves as a natural consequence of the choice the child has made. In the Montessori environment, nothing is more disappointing than the loss of freedom.

Payment Requirements

Tuition rates as of March 31, 2022:

Preschool Academic Half Day	7:30 - 8:30 AM to 12:15 PM	\$795.00
Preschool Academic Full Day	7:30 - 8:30 AM to 3:15 PM	\$895.00
Kindergarten Academic Full Day	7:30 - 8:30 AM to 3:15 PM	\$1,500.00
Elementary Academic Full Day	7:30 - 8:30 AM to 3:15 PM	\$1,500.00

Scholarships may be available to students in all program levels through tax credit scholarship tuition organizations.

- 1.) Parents understand all tuition fees are due in advance and must 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 \$50.00 on any payment returned to Palm Valley Montessori School by the bank. Parents also understand Palm Valley Montessori School reserves the right to require guaranteed funds, cash, or money order.
- 3.) Parents understand that expenses continue whether a child is present at school each day. Enrolled families 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 30-day 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 ten (10) days after the due date, 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 8:00 AM with all students expected to arrive by 8:30 AM.
- 8.) Academic instruction ends at 3:00 PM. Those children enrolled as full days students are scheduled to be picked up by 3:15 PM. Full-day students must be picked up by 3:30 PM or additional charges will accrue.
- 9.) The rate will be \$1.00 per minute per child for parents picking up after their contracted time.

Illness Policy and Medication Procedures

Ill children will not be admitted into the school. If your child should become ill while in our care, we will attend to his needs until a parent can pick him 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 transmissible symptoms:

- Fever
- Vomiting
- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)
- Diarrhea
- 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

Should an emergency arise, we will immediately contact the parents. If parents cannot be reached, we will 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 no 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 documents or go to the school's website under the "Enrollment" page.

School Supplies List

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

School Calendar

See separate documents or go to the school's website

Snack & Share Day

Primary students will be given pre-selected “snack and share” days. On these predetermined days, the child will bring in some healthy foods to share with classmates for snack time and an item for show and tell. Students are encouraged to bring in food they can help prepare: apples to wash and slice, bananas to peel and cut, and cantaloupe to scoop. All food should be finger food i.e. no yogurt or applesauce. Primary students will have one snack and share day approximately once every two months. The schedules will be available on the Weekly Connection and in the school lobby. Snack is served family-style and is available throughout the morning.

Show and tell items should be something meaningful to the child. Cultural artifacts, favorite books (licensed character free), something the child made, an item from nature, or a photograph are all wonderful sharing objects. Please do not bring toys to share, or any item featuring a movie or television character.

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 snacks 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 attending a school function that includes food, such as International Day or Summer Sizzle, do not give food to any student but your own.

Student Lunches

All students will need to bring a packed lunch from home. All lunches are refrigerated, and food can be reheated for students. ****Please package food items requiring reheating separate from the other items in microwave-safe storage (i.e. glass instead of plastic containers).**

Lunch boxes should be free of characters (no Spider-Man, Barbie, Disney Cars, etc.). For example, a lunch box 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. Lunch boxes also need to be a reasonable size. Lunch boxes are kept refrigerated and oversized lunch boxes take up too much space. ****We ask that lunch boxes be relatively small, so we can accommodate refrigerating all lunches.** Every lunch box 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 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 Lunch-able 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.

Student Lunches (continued)

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 our efforts by having your child practice unzipping their own lunch box, opening their containers, and eating independently and politely while remaining seated at home.

Lunches will be consumed either inside at tables or at outdoor tables. Students will need to pack all necessary utensils and a napkin in their lunch box. Utensils will go back home for cleaning. Students will use their water bottles during lunch.

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

Water Bottles

All students need to bring a non-spill spout water bottle daily. The water bottle should only be filled with water. Please ensure the water bottle is character-free and clearly marked with your child's name. Water bottles should also be relatively small or child-size. Milk/milk boxes and juice/juice boxes are prohibited in the classroom environment. **Please DO NOT SEND any beverages other than water.**

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 of materials and design of space. Everything has a place and a purpose. Clothing should also 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. 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 they were going to the park for the day. Overalls create an obstacle when using the toilet to save these for the weekend. 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, watches, slap bracelets, colored hairpieces, etc. are not permitted. Flip sequins invite touching and are distracting. Please do not allow your child to put distracting items from home (lip gloss, stuffed animals, action figures, etc.) in their cubby.
- Hats are permitted for sun protection while playing on the playground or working outdoors. Students are asked to remove hats indoors.

Dress Code (continued)

- 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 potentially 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, or other student belongings.
- Please also evaluate whether the image or message on your child's clothes is 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 on reality are fine. For example, wearing a Diamondbacks cap or a Phoenix Zoo t-shirt is fine.
- Temporary tattoos are not to be worn at school.

Extra Clothes

Students should come to school dressed for the work of the day. Primary students should bring one 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 the case of spills, bloody noses, illness or injury, mud, etc.

Birthday Celebrations

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.

Due to allergy restrictions and a desire to minimize treats, we ask that parents DO NOT celebrate their child's birthday at school with food or sweets. Sharing baby photos or making a poster board presentation about your child's year are fun ways to celebrate a birthday in the classroom.

Plants or flowers for our classroom environment, playground balls, sandbox toys, colored pencils, a cultural artifact, or a book would also make a great, long-term contribution to the community to acknowledge and celebrate your child's special day. 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 their special day.

Please schedule a birthday celebration in your child's classroom by contacting our school manager, Ms. LeAnna at leanna.gonzalez@palmvalleymontessori.com or 623-986-9516.