

## Family Handbook

### Desert Spring Children's Center

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#### Table of Contents:

Mission Statement, Philosophy, Guiding Principles, Goals & Outcomes.....	2-4
Enrollment.....	4
Tuition Payment Procedure.....	4
Activities & Curriculum.....	4-6
Hours of Service.....	6
First Day of School.....	6-7
What To Bring.....	7-8
Policies.....	8-9
Parent Involvement.....	10-12
Nutrition and Food Safety.....	12-14
Health Policies.....	14-16
Emergencies.....	16-17
Corporate Information.....	17
Appendix A: Tuition & Fees.....	18
Appendix B: Assessment Plan.....	19-20
Appendix C: Conflict Resolution Procedure.....	21

## **Desert Spring Mission Statement:**

In partnership with parents and the greater community, Desert Spring Children's Center will provide an outstanding and comprehensive early childhood program for children and their families.

We will:

- provide opportunities for children to collaborate in a setting conducive to the development of wholesome social relationships.
- provide opportunities for meaningful play that is based on the child's individual needs, interest and abilities and that will build important foundations for future academic pursuits
- provide experiences for children that are inclusive of all abilities, cultures, ethnicities, genders, and gender identities.
- document children's learning in order to reinforce the concept that sharing the stories of children is the responsibility of educators, families, the wider community and the early childhood profession.

## **Desert Spring Philosophy:**

We believe every child:

- Is a capable and competent being
- Is a unique and complex learner
- Deserves an environment that supports the optimal development of the whole child
- Learns through child-directed, child-initiated, teacher-supported play
- Is a social being who learns through the development of relationships and collaboration with peers and adults
- Is by nature a creative and curious researcher and learns best through hands on exploration that is relevant to the child's experiences
- Deserves trust and respect to facilitate confidence and healthy risk-taking
- Possesses hundreds of languages with which to describe their beliefs & experiences & express their learning

## **Guiding Principles:**

- Each child progresses at a unique rate, has an individual learning style and possesses diverse abilities
- Young children learn through active exploration of their environment when there is a balance between self-discovery and adult initiated projects
- Children's learning is based on prior knowledge and experiences guided by nurturing adults
- Optimal learning occurs in environments where the adults are respectful of the child, the family, the language, the culture, and the community

- Children's learning is best understood using ongoing observation, anecdotal record keeping, and collection of children's work
- Children develop a sense of empowerment by having many opportunities to make choices within their daily routines
- Children learn best when their nutritional and health needs are met
- Families are the primary caregivers and educators of young children
- Families, educators & children are equal protagonists in children's learning
- Young children are competent and capable learners regardless of their backgrounds, experiences, and varying abilities

## **Goals for Children, Families, and the Community:**

All children will experience growth and learning in all areas of development, including cognitive, physical, and social-emotional.

All families will be supported in their role of the primary caregivers and educators of children.

The community will be aware of the importance of early childhood and the need for high-quality early care and education.

## **Expected Outcomes:**

Based on Tom Drummond's 15 Capabilities for Children, Desert Spring desires the following outcomes for children and their families.

When children leave our program, they can:

- Participate as a member of an interdependent community
- Care for themselves, the others, and the community
- Treat others with love and compassion
- Cooperate with other children to accomplish group goals
- Celebrate group accomplishment
- Laugh and play with a tangible sense of joy
- Express many human emotions in language and art
- Be inquisitive
- Initiate new ideas and invent solutions to problems
- Stick to different tasks or come back to them in order to succeed
- Run, hit, catch, throw, kick, and tumble
- Sing and dance with exuberance
- Paint, draw, sculpt, and construct objects of beauty
- Maintain the community's spaces in cleanliness and order
- Greet guests with courtesy and charm

When families leave our program, they can:

- Be confident in their ability to advocate for their children

- Understand the importance of being involved in their child's education
- Experience the joy of parenting
- Find community resources to meet their needs in caring for their child
- Describe important aspects of their child's development
- Feel respected, welcomed, and nurtured by staff

## **Enrollment**

To enroll your child at Desert Spring, schedule a tour with the director and complete a Registration Form with your \$75 registration fee. You will then be given an enrollment packet which includes a blue emergency card and a Health Assessment Form. These forms must be completed and returned along with a current copy of your child's immunization records prior to attendance. Immunization records must be up-to-date before your child can begin school.

We highly recommend that you observe the classroom without your child and talk with the staff *before enrolling your child*. After the observation without your child, we invite you to bring your child to visit the school and meet the teachers

Desert Spring does not discriminate and will enroll children who can benefit from the services provided by the school, curriculum, and teachers of our program.

## **Tuition**

Desert Spring is supported by tuition fees, making it extremely important for those fees to be paid on time. Please pay tuition by the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month or make special arrangements with the director. Desert Spring does not give refunds or discounts for vacations, school closures, or illnesses. The tuition fees are based on our yearly expenses and are divided into monthly payments. (See Appendix A, p. 11, for current tuition fees.)

## **Activities and Curriculum**

Our program is designed to meet the diverse needs of preschoolers: social interaction with their peers, stimulation for their inquisitive minds, space to explore new body skills, development of their communication skills, and a fostering of independence. We believe children are natural learners. We provide a multi-faceted environment allowing them the freedom to explore and discover their world.

Our curriculum framework is The Creative Curriculum (Dodge & Colker, 2000), which provides our staff with a framework on which to build our philosophy, goals, objectives for children, and guidelines for teaching. We are also inspired and influenced by the Reggio Emilia approach to early care and education, which has influenced our philosophy, goals, relationships with families and the community, and greatly impacts our value of the child as capable, competent, and deserving of the utmost respect.

The Desert Spring day is a balance of indoor and outdoor activities. Our outdoor activities

include riding tricycles, swinging, gardening, large motor activities, water and sand play, socializing, creative playing, and organized games. We strongly urge you to bring your child by 9 a.m. in order to establish a consistent rhythm for your child. This gives them the time to transition from home to school, and relate to their teachers and friends before morning circle time. Circle time is when we gather together as a class community to sing, introduce new materials and concepts, read stories, have conversational sharing time, and do movement activities, such as yoga or creative movement. Once a week, singer/songwriter Bruce Phillips leads our singing circle. The morning includes circle time, snack, morning centers and outside play.

### Educational Setting

Each classroom is divided into learning centers that create an environment that is enjoyable and motivating for the children. The centers include an Art Center, where children develop creativity, eye hand coordination, fine motor development, expression of emotions through artistic medium, and spatial and design skills. The Math/Fine Motor Centers in each room help children develop classification, problem solving, observation, experimentation, classifying, patterning, one to one correspondence, ordering, and numeration(intellectual skills). The Library Center develops writing, speaking, pre-reading skills, listening, and problem solving. Each room has a Dramatic Play Center that aids children in developing language, social problem solving, cooperation, role playing, creativity as well as intellectual skills. The Block Centers in the classrooms encourage spatial relationships, design abilities, vocabulary development, cooperation, patterning, problem solving, and measurement. The Sensory Tables (rice and water table) in each room develops scientific and math abilities listed above, as well as vocabulary development, social problem solving, and a calming tactile stimulation that often provides comfort to some children. Large motor play is incorporated daily on the playground at outdoor time.

### Language/Pre-reading Philosophy

Desert Spring's philosophy of learning emphasizes the theory of whole language, which simply means addressing all of the aspects of language such as speaking, reading, listening, and writing. All of these aspects are combined and are included in the curriculum in both direct teaching and child-initiated learning experiences. This approach helps children learn language and reading in a natural way and increases the child's appreciation and usage of the beauty and power of language.

### Math Philosophy

At Desert Spring, we believe that young children need experiences in math that are geared to their developmental level and that do not demand abilities they have not yet developed. Children need a hands-on approach for math concepts. They need to be able to see, feel, handle, and manipulate quantities in a game-like manner. Instead of simply having a child count, they should have the opportunity to match concrete objects as they count. They also need many opportunities to group similar objects into categories. We believe that a child will naturally learn these concepts if guided by

parents and educators that provide warmth and encouragement.

### Play Philosophy

Early childhood educators have long believed that play makes important contributions to children's development and therefore must have a key role in preschool curriculums. Play is a rich, varied and complex process that requires ample time, materials, and resources (Christie, Wardle, 1992). There is a relationship between children's use of symbols in play and their use of symbols in the academic curriculum. Concepts valued in the school curriculum, such as reading, writing and problem solving, are all based on the expectation that children are capable of a certain level of abstract, symbolic thought (Almy, Monighan, Scales & Van Hoorn, 1984). At Desert Spring, children are given liberal amounts of play time and are encouraged to participate in symbolic play so that they can play through their ideas, think, problem solve, and foster creativity and imagination.

### **Hours of Service**

Desert Spring Children's Center is open from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday- Friday, year around. **We ask that all children arrive by 9 a.m.** (See "Arrival" under Policies, p. 5) If you will be later than 5:30 p.m. in picking up your child, you must call. Your little one and the staff worry! If you are later than 5:30, we will stay here with your child and charge you \$1.00 per minute, payable immediately to the teacher in attendance. When children are picked up late, they feel insecure about where their parents are. Please respect your child's needs by being punctual.

### **First Day of School**

At the beginning of the school year, both parents and teachers want to see the children get off to a good start. A peaceful and mindful transition assures a successful adjustment to school. Frequent visits to the school together with your child before he/she begins can help children build a relationship with the place and the teachers. Feel free to schedule visits with us to assist your child in making a smooth transition. We recognize that you are the expert on your child, and will work with you as best we can to make the transition as easy and comfortable as possible for you and your child. The "reacting to new situations" and "reacting to separation" portions of the Child Information Form in your enrollment packet will provide valuable information to your child's teacher about how your child might react to the first day of school. We encourage you to read books about starting school with your child for the weeks before school starts. A day or two before the child begins, talk in general terms about what the child might expect, e.g., making new friends, riding tricycles, swinging, listening to stories, singing, eating lunch, and resting. Accompany your child to the classroom and greet the teacher. Give the child a quick, loving good-bye and leave the child in the care of the teacher. Some children part easily from their parents and others do not. Be assured that this is normal. Leave taking is most successful when the child can focus on the new environment and activities at hand. Make your good-bye as brief as possible and trust

that the teacher will comfort your child. If you are concerned that the leave-taking was too tearful or upsetting for the child, give a call later in the morning. A staff member will be able to dispel your fears.

When asking your child about the day, do not be discouraged if it is difficult for your child to relay specific events. Usually the child has been involved in many different activities, making it difficult to remember the details. Our program encourages internalizing accomplishments. We are concerned with process rather than product. Consequently, you may notice that your child will bring home only a few projects. Please be patient as your child gradually reveals newly acquired skills and knowledge.

### **What to Bring**

Snacks: Please send a morning and afternoon snack with your child. The snack should be labeled with your child's name, date, and a.m. or p.m. Snack suggestions are provided in the Nutrition Guide.

Lunch: Please provide a nutritious lunch each day, including fruit juice, milk, or water. Try to avoid highly processed foods, especially those made with sugar. Please refrain from sending sugar and highly processed and preserved, empty calorie foods in your child's lunch. Read the labels on beverages as many "juice" drinks contain only a small percentage of juice and a high amount of sugar. For the love of the environment packaging suggestions include reusable plastic containers, eating utensils (when needed), thermos or reusable sealable cup – all packed together in a compactly-sized lunch box. Lunch boxes are kept in the refrigerator and must be labeled with your child's first and last name and the date. We have no facilities to reheat lunches. A moist washcloth makes a great face and hand wipe! Thanks for your cooperation in not sending "sweet treats" or glass containers.

Lunch time is a busy time of day. If you pick-up at 12:15p.m., please arrive promptly as the rest of the children begin to prepare for nap after eating.

Clothing: We recommend that you keep an extra set of clothes, including underwear and socks, in your child's cubby. Water-play, wild hand washing, and accidents are frequent causes of changing clothes.

Blanket: This is a napping school! Due to the length and activities of our day, all children are encouraged to nap (sleep). Please keep a blanket at school. All clothing and blankets should be labeled with the child's name.

Diapers: If your child is in the two-year-old class, please bring diapers and wipes. It is your responsibility to make sure your child is always supplied with these essential items.

Toys: Generally toys are left at home or kept in the child's cubby. We encourage the sharing of interesting treasures or finds like leaves, nuts, rocks, shells, et al. Any type of weapon ( guns, swords, knives) – imaginary or otherwise – are not allowed at Desert Spring. Books and tapes are

welcomed every day.

## **Policies**

Arrival: It's important that all children arrive by 9 a.m. Late arrivals disrupt the flow and consistency of the morning activities for all children.

Handwashing: Children and staff must wash their hands upon arrival at the center. Use handwashing as part of your morning routine with your child (it can be a very nurturing process). Ask your child to share what he knows about handwashing or play a game while looking at the Handwashing Posters in the bathrooms.

Sign-in and Sign-Out: There is a sign-in/sign-out book under the outside bulletin board. Each child has a sheet. State regulations require parents to sign in and out daily using first initial and last name. It is important for your child's security and our attendance record.

Authorization to Pick-Up Child: Your child may only be picked up by the individuals authorized on the blue registration form. Any person in addition to the custodial parents who may be picking up your child must have signed the registration form where appropriate. Phone authorization is confirmed with a return phone call to the parent and identification will be required from the person picking up the child.

Security: Although we maintain an open door policy for families, non-family visitors must be accompanied by a staff member at all times. If a visitor enters the school, staff approach the visitor immediately to inquire how that visitor might be helped. If the director is unavailable, the visitor is asked to depart and call back to schedule an appointment. Staff have written procedures that must be followed in order to ensure the security of the school and children.

Provisions for Special Needs Children: All children will be evaluated individually to determine child's specific need and how Desert Spring can adequately assist in his/her development and growth. Teachers automatically individualize daily activities for the children in their care by tailoring lesson plans to the unique learning needs of the children in their class. In addition, any child with an identified special need will have access to an Individualized Education Plan if desired by the parents. This plan will be created with the parents, teachers, and any other professionals or therapists.

Field Trips: All field trips are within walking distance of the school. Children are not transported with private vehicles. Permission slips will be provided in advance. No child will be able to leave the school without a permission slip. Any child unable to participate may remain at school. Teachers and other supervising adults will ensure the safety and well-being of the children on field trips. A communication device and First Aid kit will be taken on field trips in case of emergencies.

Supervision of children: Desert Spring teaching staff supervise toddlers by sight and sound at all times. For preschoolers, teaching staff supervise children primarily by sight but may allow children to be out of sight but within sound for short intervals of time, as long as teachers check frequently on the child.

Discipline: The staff at Desert Spring provides a warm and loving atmosphere that encourages each child to develop emotionally and socially. We teach cooperation, caring, respect, and communication skills. Children are encouraged to take responsibility, and to understand and accept consequences for their actions. Positive behaviors and respectful problem-solving strategies are noticed and encouraged. Every attempt is made to redirect inappropriate behaviors. When necessary, a child may be encouraged/helped to take time away from the group to allow him/her to calm down, think about his/her behavior, and to observe others behaving in an appropriate manner.

Disenrollment: Desert Spring Children's Center strives to provide an enriched environment featuring self-directed learning activities for children ages 2-5. Classes are comprised of multi-aged groups, and include independent, hands-on educational experiences. On occasion, the teaching staff may determine that a specific child is not functioning adequately in the classroom environment. If this determination is made, the following procedures will occur:

1. Parent Conference: A parent conference will be scheduled within one month of enrollment. At the conference, parents will be provided with a written report outlining the areas of concern.
2. Behavior Contract: During the parent conference, Desert Spring staff will outline a proposed behavior contract with the parents. The contract will include goals and timelines. This contract will be signed by parents and staff after review.
3. Follow-up Conference: A follow-up conference will be scheduled within one month of the original conference. At this parent conference, Desert Spring staff will outline results from the behavior contract to date. Desert Spring staff will recommend one of the following options: Continuation of the behavior contract; or Determination of Disenrollment (in writing). Timely parental participation is required.

Transitions: The well-being and comfort of the children at Desert Spring are our utmost concern. For that reason, we staff our classrooms to minimize the number of transitions children experience during the day and the program year, including group transitions, teaching staff transitions, and classroom transitions.

Children typically “graduate” from one class to another usually in Summer or Fall Semesters, depending on a variety of factors. During our Family Conferences (held twice per year), you will have the opportunity to discuss this transition with your child’s teacher and together can decide whether your child should change classrooms in Summer or Fall

(depending on enrollment availability). We will also provide you with information about helping your child transition from our school to kindergarten if you are interested.

## **Parent Involvement**

We encourage your active participation in your child's experience at Desert Spring. As partners we are sharing the important task of educating and nurturing your child.

Visitation: Desert Spring maintains an open door policy for families in attendance. Families may visit any area of the school at any time during our regular hours of operation, as long as staff are available to monitor visits (for safety reasons). We also expect that when visiting or volunteering at the school, positive discipline methods are used and that appropriate behavior is modeled by all adults in our school.

Communication: We strive to maintain frequent and consistent communication about your child's activities, developmental milestones, and other information that affects the well-being and development of your child. For preschool age children, the teachers will communicate verbally with you about your child on at least a weekly basis. For toddlers, we will communicate with you daily, either in writing or verbally. We appreciate your feedback and respect your suggestions and concerns. Keep us informed of changes in your child's life/home that may require sensitive handling by her/his teacher. We hope you will be open to our observations as well.

Since it is difficult for us to get involved in lengthy conversations when the children need our attention, please feel free to schedule an appointment with us when you have questions, concerns, or great ideas. We also request your cooperation in reading the materials we send home, and following the policies we have established for the smooth operation of the school. If you have any serious concerns about your child, the staff, or the program, please contact the director immediately to set up a conference. As partners in your child's growth and development, we want to be able to help you find the community resources available to ensure your child receives the support he/she needs. All Desert Spring Staff receive training in community resources and can provide referrals to services.

We acknowledge that communication is vital for the home/school partnership. For this reason, we will provide communication to families in the language that is best understood by the parents to the best of our ability. Please let the director know if you wish to receive communication in a language other than English, and we will provide a translator when possible.

Parent Conferences: Arrangements can be made for a conference with the teacher as the need arises. Please, always feel free to bring your concerns about your child or the program to the director or teachers. Parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled for all parents, twice per year. During these conferences, we will share our observations of your child in writing, as well as any results from our Intake Screenings and Ongoing Assessments. We will also give you the opportunity to discuss what your child is learning and how it is measured.

Laundry: We ask parents to sign-up to launder the sheets and blankets of the children approximately once a month. We value and appreciate your participation!

Donations: For many years, I felt we should never ask for assistance. Finally a parent said she had been willing and eager to help us but we seemed too proud to ask. "People like to help" was her point. So we will keep a list of supplies. Families may select an item (say toilet paper), then each month they bring us about \$10 of that item. What a great benefit to our program! But if you sign-up for a donation, we will expect it each month, so decide what suits you. Not every family will be able to help in this manner, but there will be other ways to contribute your time and resources. You are greatly appreciated.

Education: Classes are occasionally offered at Desert Spring. We invite you to share your unique skills, talents, and hobbies with us. If you have an early education or child development topic that you would like to learn more about, please let one of the staff members know and we will help find information for you, or will schedule a Parent Class if there is enough interest among families.

Volunteers: We often need help with projects such as playground improvement, maintenance of equipment, or repair of furniture. Please let any of the staff know if you would like to volunteer. You are also welcome and encouraged to bring or share a classroom activity that will help the children learn more about your family culture. Please speak with your child's teacher to schedule a time that is convenient for you and the classroom schedule.

Parent Committee: Desert Spring has a Parent Committee in which parents can be part of planning activities, policies, and teacher appreciation events. Please let the director know if you are interested in serving on the Committee.

Governance: Desert Spring is governed by a Board of Directors which meets at least annually. We prefer to have representation on the Board of families with children who attend Desert Spring. If you are interested in taking a leadership role in the school, we highly encourage you to do so. Please let the director know if you would like to serve on our Board of Directors.

Program Evaluation: Our school is dedicated to ongoing improvement to ensure that we provide the very best care and education for your child. We maintain written policies regarding our annual program evaluation and our methods for conducting it. In addition, we encourage families to be part of this evaluation and will provide you with written results of our continual improvement. Typically the results are shared and discussed during the mandatory Parent Orientation at the beginning of the school year.

Confidentiality: Our program emphasizes a trusting partnership between families and staff. For this reason, we have added a Confidentiality Policy to our Staff Handbook, and staff sign a confidentiality statement. We keep all information about families and children confidential unless you give us permission to disclose to others. Personal information about individual children is kept in locked Child Files, and only staff of Desert Spring staff have access to this information (except Department of Health Services Child Care

Licensing personnel who must check files to determine our compliance with licensing regulations).

Community Resources: Desert Spring maintains a current list of child and family support services available in our community. We are happy to share the list with you and will assist you in locating, contacting, and using community resources. In addition, our program collaborates with other programs in the community through Director's Networking Groups, educational interest forums (e.g. Tucson Children's Project), and committees and advocacy groups to guide collaborative work and to achieve mutually desired outcomes for children.

## **Nutrition and Food Safety**

We believe that a simple, wholesome diet results in healthier, happier children. Please refer to the Nutrition Guide for detailed information about Food Safety & Storage, USDA CACFP Guidelines, Appropriate Serving Sizes for Children, Healthy Snack Ideas, and Additional Nutrition Resources.

Snacks: Snacks should consist of whole grain cereals, breads and crackers (salt free or low in sodium), nut and seed butters, fresh fruit and vegetables, and dairy products. Snacks are served mid-morning and mid-afternoon.

Lunches: Lunches should consist of at least three food groups (refer to the Nutrition Guide). All lunches, food containers, and water bottles must be marked with your child's first and last name and the date. Masking tape may be used to mark the date.

Nutrition: As mentioned above, you will receive a Nutrition Guide to assist you in providing wholesome and nutritious foods to support your child's optimal development. We can also provide you with a referral to a nutrition counselor if you need additional assistance.

Special Dietary Needs: Allergies and other special dietary needs must be indicated on the blue registration form. Children's food restrictions are posted for staff's information so please keep us informed of any changes (we will ask for your permission to post your child's food restrictions in the eating areas). If your child has special dietary or feeding needs or has food allergies, you will be asked to participate in creating a Feeding Plan which will ensure that our staff are able to meet your child's needs. This plan will be confidential and will be kept in your child's file.

Birthdays and Special Events: If you wish to honor your child's birthday at Desert Spring, we recommend that you bring a story or a craft to share with the class. Since we must follow strict guidelines regarding the food that is served at the school, we must ask that if you choose to send food, it must be a **fruit that can be peeled by the children or a**

**commercially prepared food in the original unopened container.** Please send healthy low-sugar foods.

Alternatively, the birthday child may bring stickers or a small trinket to give to the other children. In this way, your child feels special as each "gift" is given, and sharing and celebration with others is emphasized.

Special events occur in many different cultures, and we would like to incorporate families' cultures whenever possible. If you would like to share an event or holiday from your culture, please let us know.

Desert Spring maintains written policies and procedures that pertain to Nutrition and Food Safety. Staff are trained on these policies upon hire and are updated on them annually. The policies are available to parents upon request. The policies include the following:

- School Nutrition Plan
- Use of USDA CACFP Guidelines
- Meal Patterns
- Food Groups
- Juice
- Available Drinking Water
- Dietary Modifications
- Care for Children with Food Allergies
- Feeding Plans for Children with Special Nutrition or Feeding Needs
- Portions for Children
- Encouraging Self-Feeding in Toddlers
- Developmentally Appropriate Seating and Utensils for Meals
- Tableware and Feeding Utensils
- Activities Incompatible with Eating
- Socialization During Meals
- Participation of Children and Staff in Mealtime Activities
- Hot Liquids and Foods (safety)
- Location of Adults while Supervising Children Eating
- Foods that are Choking Hazards
- Prohibited Uses of Food
- Food Brought From Home- Labels
- Nutritional Quality of Food Brought From Home
- Maintenance of Food Service Surfaces and Equipment
- Handwashing Sinks
- Maintaining Safe Food Temperatures
- Compliance with Food Sanitation Standards
- Staff Restricted from Food Handling
- Precautions for Safe Food Supply

- Leftovers
- Maintenance of Refrigerators and Freezers
- Storage of Foods that Do Not Require Refrigeration
- Storage of Garbage
- Storage of Cleaning Agents, Separate from Food
- Cleaning of Food Areas and Equipment
- Method for Washing Dishes by Hand
- Nutrition Learning Experiences for Children
- Nutritional Education for Families

## **Health Policies**

Happy, healthy children are the primary concern of Desert Spring. Children must have a physical exam and a health form completed by a physician before attending school. We are also required by law to keep updated records of each child's immunizations and to notify parents when immunizations are due. Please be sure to return the Health Assessment Form from your enrollment packet before your child's first day. Note that the form must be completed by your child's health care provider. If you do not have a health care provider but wish to receive information about finding a physician or enrolling your child in KidsCare (insurance through the state, dependent on income eligibility), please notify the director.

### **Sick Child Policy:**

Desert Spring believes that a healthy environment creates positive learning experiences. Please safeguard your child and others by keeping him/her home if signs of illness are present. To guide you in deciding whether to keep your child home, we have outlined the symptoms of a sick child. The staff at Desert Spring will also follow the same guidelines in deciding whether to send a child home from school.

If your child is ill and will not be attending school, the school must be notified. Please call and inform the school of the type of illness or symptoms that your child is exhibiting.

### **Please keep your child home:**

- If your child has a fever of 100 degrees or above (orally) or has had a fever during the previous 24 hour period
- If your child has a cold that includes one or more of these symptoms: less than 2 days old, has a heavy nasal discharge, has a congested cough, or child complains of ear pain or throat pain with or without a fever
- If your child has diarrhea or vomiting
- If your child has skin sore or mouth sore discharging fluid or pus
- If your child is unusually drowsy or tired

- If your child exhibits symptoms of a communicable disease:
  - Red and/or runny eyes
  - Rash
  - Sore throat
  - mites/lice

**If any of the above symptoms are present in your child while at school, a parent will be notified and asked to take the child home. If the parent(s) can not be reached, the emergency contacts will be notified.**

**Your child may return to school:**

- After a fever is not present for 24 hours **without** fever reducing medication
- The cold is over but a minor nasal drip is still present
- Free of diarrhea and vomiting for 24 hours
- Rash is completely gone or a note from a physician states that rash is not contagious

Contagious Diseases: These must be reported immediately so that notification of exposure can be relayed to parents of the child's classmates.

Children showing symptoms of the following infectious diseases will also be excluded for the time required by the State Health Department.

1. Chicken Pox: Excluded for 7-10 days or until all pox are scabbed over
2. Strep Throat: Excluded until child has been on medication(antibiotic) for 24 hours
3. Pink Eye: Excluded until child has been on medication for 24 hour
4. Diarrhea: Excluded until 12 hours after last symptoms have appeared

Medication: In general the administering of medications should be done as much as possible at home. However, when a doctor or other health practitioner prescribes a medication that must be given during school hours, parents must fill out a detailed medicine form and the medicine must be in its original container and labeled with the child's name. Non-prescription medications will only be administered when accompanied by a note from a physician stating that the medication is necessary. All medications must be kept in a locked storage container.

Sun Protection: The strength of the Arizona sun is intense! We encourage you to apply sunscreens in the morning and to have your child bring a sunhat to protect her/his eyes and face.

Absences: If your child will be absent because of illness, or any other reason, please call and inform us.

Immunizations: The Pima County Health Department requires that the school have an up-to-date photocopy of the immunization record on file for all children in the program. For those who do not immunize their children for religious or medical reasons, immunization waiver forms are available. If there is an outbreak of a communicable disease, such as measles, mumps, etc., **non-immunized children need to be kept at home for six weeks after the last**

**reported case.** This is a Pima County Health rule.

Head Lice: Due to our experience over the years, we have had to devise a more stringent policy regarding head lice than that which is suggested by the Pima County Health Department. Head lice have become resistant to current shampoos on the market. One treatment and sometimes two treatments no longer guarantee that the lice have been stopped; therefore, a no-nits policy seems a prudent course of action at this time. In order to support this policy, the faculty will work to evaluate each individual case to see when the child can return to school. In our experience, this may require as long as a week. We understand that this can present difficulty to families whose children need to be kept out of school for a longer period of time, but the price we have to pay is great. Besides exposing many children and families to this challenge, the entire school must be stripped of all fabric materials, leaving a bare classroom. It becomes a financial burden to families and the school to rectify a lice problem. We appreciate your cooperation in this regard. If any problem does occur with an individual, the school must be notified at once.

Inspection Reports: Desert Spring Children's Center is inspected by the Department of Health Services annually. Our license number is 1687. These inspection reports are available to the parents upon request. They are located in the green file cabinet in the preschool room (labeled Inspection Reports). The Department of Health Services (DHS) is located at 400 W. Congress, Suite #100, Tucson, Arizona, 85701. The phone number for DHS is 628-6540.

## **Emergencies**

Accidents: Desert Spring Children's Center carries liability insurance. In case of an accident that involves your child, you will be notified. Appropriate first aid will be administered. In the event that you cannot be reached, your child's physician will be notified of the emergency and consulted as to its management. Please make sure that your emergency information is current on your child's blue card.

Procedures in Case of Emergency: In the event of a medical emergency, you will be called. If we cannot reach you, we will call one of the other names on the blue registration form. All Desert Spring staff are trained in Pediatric First Aid and CPR. We practice monthly fire drills and maintain smoke detectors and alarms. In addition, the school maintains written policies and procedures to ensure our preparedness for an emergency.

Procedures in Case of Emergency Evacuation: Parents will be called to pick up children if evacuation is deemed necessary. Children will be relocated in First Christian Church. In the case that evacuation from the immediate area is necessary, children will be relocated at First Church United Methodist (915 E. 4<sup>th</sup> St.) or Trinity Presbyterian Church (400 E. University).

## **Corporate Information**

Desert Spring Children's Center is a nonprofit corporation under section 501(C) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code. Our E.I.N. is 86-058-5831. We are also recognized by the Arizona Corporation Commission as a Domestic Corporation organized under the laws of the State of Arizona.

Desert Spring Children's Center always maintains current liability insurance. Our agent is Wilcox and Associates, Child Care Insurance Specialists, and the policy is with Capitol Indemnity Corporation.

Desert Spring is inspected annually by the Department of Health Services (DHS). The inspection reports are available to the parents upon request, or through DHS at 400 W. Congress Suite #100, Tucson, AZ, 85701, phone: 628-6540. The director of Desert Spring Children's Center is Sara VanSlyke. The designated directors (to act on behalf of the director when not present at the facility) are Andrea Buttrick and Shannon Higgins.

# Appendix A

## Tuition and Fees

Beginning August 2010

### Preschool

Five Full Days (7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.).....	\$575
Four Full Days.....	\$530
Five Half Days (8:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.).....	\$460

### Two Year Olds

Five Full Days (7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.).....	\$575
Five Half Days (8:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.).....	\$530
Extended Day (3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.).....	\$25/month

### All Ages

Registration Fee.....	\$75
Yearly Materials Fee.....	\$50

### Daily Rates:

Full (7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.).....	\$60
Half (8:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.).....	\$45

Re-enrollment after 30-days leave.....\$75

Second Child Discount.....10% off tuition

Late Fee.....\$1.00/minute  
(5:31 p.m. is considered late!)

**Please Contact Us For Current Pricing!**

# Appendix B: Assessment Plan

## Timeline:

- July (or upon enrollment): Teachers conduct Screening using Brooks Ages & Stages Questionnaire, in collaboration with families.
- August: Teachers begin Assessment process: collect written observations, photos, children's work, and other evidence to support completion of formal assessment tools (Work Sampling System for preschoolers and Creative Curriculum Assessment Tool for Toddlers)
- October: Parent Teacher Conferences are held, families receive written results of first assessments.
- February: Teachers complete 2<sup>nd</sup> formal assessment tools
- April: Parent Teacher Conferences, share written results of 2<sup>nd</sup> assessments and discuss transition plans.

## Assessment Policies:

### SCREENING AND IDENTIFICATION OF SPECIAL NEEDS

Rationale: Early intervention is critical to ensuring that all children with special needs are able to reach their full potential. We recognize that many children who are eligible for services may not receive them because of lack of screening and identification.

Policy: All children at Desert Spring will be screened for the purpose of identifying special needs in order to ensure that all children and families receive necessary services.

#### Procedure:

1. All families will be required to provide the school with a copy of the "Health Assessment Form" completed by a physician. The form includes vision, hearing and developmental screening.
2. All incoming paperwork and forms are to be reviewed by the director. The director will identify whether there is a "health concern" as noted by the health care provider, and will notify parents of the possible delay or disability.
3. If indicated on the form, children who need follow up after screening (concern identified) will receive a "case review". During the Case Review, the family, teachers, and director will meet to discuss next steps in the referral process. The family will be referred to necessary services by school staff, or, in the case that the health care provider has already done so, staff will ensure that the family has made contact with the necessary agencies. Agencies may include a physician, school district special education team, AZEIP, early childhood mental health agencies, family counselors, or other agencies that may provide needed services.
4. For children with identified needs, an Individualized Education Plan will be written in conjunction with the teachers, director, parents, and other related specialists. The IEP will be reviewed quarterly (see IEP form). For children with special health or nutritional needs, a Special Health Care Plan will be completed.
5. All modifications to environment and/or "special plans" will be documented in the Child's File (see Program Modifications Form).

### ASSESSMENT IN SUPPORT OF LEARNING

Rationale: The purpose of assessment of children's development and learning is to inform planning of day-to-day curriculum and to ensure that the program is addressing each child's individual needs. We have selected the Creative Curriculum and Work Sampling tools for assessment because they fit with our program's philosophy that children learn best in ways that are relevant to their own lives, and that often a learning experience will cover several learning domains at once. In addition, our belief that the best early education for children includes opportunities across all areas of development is consistent both with our selected assessment tools and curriculum. Our philosophy emphasizes the fact that while there are expected ranges for children to develop particular skills, not all children acquire skills at exactly the same age. These assessment tools fit with our philosophy and curriculum goals of individualizing the curriculum for children. Finally, the assessment tools are culturally sensitive and therefore fit with our philosophy that our staff and

families must maintain a respectful and collaborative relationship.

Policy: All children will receive “learning assessments” at least two times per year and will include a variety of assessment methods. All families must receive written results of assessments.

Procedure:

1. Toddlers will be formally assessed using the Creative Curriculum Individualizing Goals and Objectives for Children Form. Preschool children are to be formally assessed using the Work Sampling Preschool Checklist. The checklists will be completed by the child’s teaching team and the results are to be shared with parents during parent teacher conferences. The Checklists will be completed at least Fall and Spring semesters. The results will be shared with parents at Parent Conferences in Fall and Spring semesters.
2. In addition, children will be informally assessed. The child’s portfolio is one informal assessment tool used and will include samples of the child’s classroom work. Other informal assessment tools are photos, written observations by teachers, and other documentation of children’s learning.
3. All assessment tools, formal and informal, have been reviewed for cultural sensitivity. It is the responsibility of teachers to ensure that Parent Teacher Conferences are conducted in a culturally sensitive manner. Desert Spring will make efforts to provide an interpreter for families upon request.
4. Teachers are responsible for completing all checklists, maintaining portfolios, and collecting at least one written observation per child per week. In addition, teachers are responsible for scheduling Parent Teacher Conferences on day designated by the director and as communicated to families on the school calendar.
5. Teachers will utilize information gained from the Assessments to create weekly curriculum goals in order to individualize planning.
6. The director is responsible for ensuring that teachers fulfill their assessment responsibilities. Assessment of child progress is a fundamental aspect of our program and is an explicit responsibility of a teacher’s duties.

# Appendix C

## Conflict Resolution Procedures

We recognize that conflict provides opportunities for problem solving and growth, when handled in a respectful, proactive, and positive manner.

We have adopted the conflict resolution procedures as outlined in *The Visionary Director* (Carter & Curtis, 1998):

Procedure:

“It is essential that confidentiality is maintained at a high level throughout conflict resolution. This process incorporates a method to document the evolution of a conflict and the attempts made at resolution. Follow up communication is an integral part of the procedure to ensure that the issue is being satisfactorily resolved and that all parties’ needs are being met.

Conflict Resolution Model:

1. Listen actively to each person. Paraphrase what was said and clarify your understanding. Acknowledge the person’s feelings.
2. Ask each person in turn what his or her needs are in the situation.
3. Jointly brainstorm many possible solutions to meet the needs. Accept all suggestions as possibilities. Do not evaluate at this point.
4. Evaluate possible solutions and select one.
5. Make an action plan together. Distribute copies of the action plan to those involved.
6. Implement the action plan.
7. Check back. Phone the conflicting parties in one week to see how they are doing. Phone back a week after that. Modify the action plan and/or call additional meetings as necessary.”

From: *The Visionary Director* (Carter & Curtis, 1998)