

Sunshine's Parent Handbook 2011 - 2012

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Sunshine School in Oro Valley, Inc.
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Sunshine's daily schedule

7 - 8:45 a.m.	Children and teachers arrive; free play
8:45 - 9 a.m.	School begins @ 8:45 with a recess
9 - 10:10 a.m.	First session of centers or classes
10:10 - 10:30 a.m.	Snack time
10:30 - 11 a.m.	Recess
11 - 12:00 p.m.	Second session
12:00 - 12:30	Lunch
12:30 - 1:00 p.m.	Recess for the children remaining at Sunshine.
1:00 - 2:00 p.m.	Resting and time for quiet play. Parents may also select enrichment activities for their children during this time. Families sign up monthly for this option; there is a small fee for these special projects.
2:00 - 6:00 p.m.	Free play, snack, an afternoon activity, cleanup, home.

Closures

Sunshine's academic year is closely aligned with the Amphitheater School District's calendar. Please visit www.Amphi.com/district/parent/calendar for specific annual closure dates.

Generally, Sunshine's fall semester begins on a Monday, early in August. The final day of preschool will be the Friday before Memorial Day is celebrated. In any academic year, Sunshine is closed for **Labor Day**; a week-long **Fall Break**; **Veteran's Day**; the 2-day **Thanksgiving Holiday**; a 2-week **Winter Break**; the **MLK Jr. Holiday**; **Rodeo Break** for 2 days at the end of February; and a **Spring Break** (also one week long.) We are here during the summer, too. Continue reading. . .

Sunshine's summer program

We offer a summer semester of class work and fun to our new, current, and former students. Summer school usually begins early in June and concludes towards the end of July (including a week's vacation to celebrate the 4th of July holiday.) Classes are held Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. until 2 p.m. Parents select a minimum of two weeks; fees are paid in advance. Please contact us in March or April for further information about summer school. Thank you.

STATE LICENSURE

We are currently licensed by the Arizona Department of Health Services to care for 78 children, none of whom may be infants or one-year-old children. A child must be 3 years of age by 8/31 and must be completely potty-trained to enroll at Sunshine ("completely" means every day & all the time.) We provide full day, part day, and school-age childcare. The ratio of adults to children is 1:13. Our license number is 1409. Sue Ziesmer Trinacty is the Director. A copy of our most-recent inspection by the Department is kept on-site and is available upon request. The Tucson office of the A.D.H. is located @ 400 W. Congress, 85701. The phone number is (520) 628-6540 and the website is www.azdhs.gov.

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATORY POLICY AS TO STUDENTS

Sunshine School in Oro Valley, Inc. admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students of the school. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of our educational policies, admissions policies, or any school-administered program.

INSURANCE INFORMATION

Arizona state law requires that licensed preschools carry general liability insurance in the amount of at least \$300,000. We exceed that requirement.

CORPORATE INFORMATION

1. Sunshine was incorporated at its inception in 1984 as a non-profit corporation under section 501 c 3 of the Internal Revenue Code. Our E.I.N. is 74-2350552.
2. We are recognized by the Arizona Corporation Commission as a not-for-profit domestic corporation organized under the laws of the State of AZ. (as of 6/26/84).
3. Sunshine is a licensed business in the Town of Oro Valley.

Sunshine School: Mission Statement

Sunshine School in Oro Valley is dedicated to providing an educational environment in which children will be able to experience continuous growth in a positive, nurturing atmosphere. We are also a resource in early childhood development to the community at large.

Sunshine School: Goals

Sunshine School's goals provide opportunities for children:

1. to develop a sense of self-identity, competence, and self-worth.
2. to establish positive relationships with adults and other children.
3. to become responsible, self-directed, and self-disciplined.
4. to learn to respect others and their property.
5. to become skillful in using language and understanding concepts.
6. to experience sensory and creative awareness through exposure to the arts.
7. to develop each individual's mental, physical, and social potential.

The role of the staff at Sunshine School is:

1. to help children feel at ease away from home.
2. to guide the children with gentle and consistent discipline.
3. to foster the unique abilities & meet the individual needs of each child.
4. to help the children develop responsible and positive attitudes towards each other, their families, and the community.
5. to create an atmosphere in which a child will be comfortable with group or solitary activities, and physical or passive activities.
6. to share a curriculum with the children which provides sensory, creative, physical, and intellectual experiences?
7. to pursue professional growth.

Sunshine School: Policies

A. Policy Statements regarding discipline, bullying, peanut allergies, the reporting of child abuse; and employing Sunshine staffers:

- **Discipline Policy:** We have high expectations for our children. They may not hit, break toys, climb on furniture, or be loud or rude. Staffers speak to children with respect and model behavior that is friendly and courteous. We think the Golden Rule applies to all ages. When children misbehave, we speak to them about alternative behaviors and empathetic responses. Time out/away is used whenever necessary: the child is removed from the situation so that she/he may become calm. If the child remains uncooperative and disruptive, we will call you to come take her/him home; we'll try again the next day. When children have conflicts, we intervene with the approach recommended by the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation (they have also helped shape our curriculum; see pages 14 - 16.) A synopsis of this approach follows:

1. Approach calmly, stopping any harmful actions;
2. Acknowledge children's feelings;
3. Gather information;
4. Restate the problem;
5. Ask for solutions & choose one together;
6. Be prepared to give follow-up support.

- **Bullying policy:** Bullying will not be tolerated at Sunshine School. What is bullying? From The Bully-Free Classroom: "Bullying is when a stronger, more powerful person hurts or frightens a smaller or weaker person deliberately and repeatedly." When we see this happen or have reports of this happening, we will intervene. We'll work with the children who are involved so that the bullying will end. The parents will also be notified. If the situation cannot be resolved, the bullying child will be asked to leave Sunshine.
- **Peanut policy:** because Sunshine accepts students with severe allergies, please be aware that we need the flexibility to alter food policies annually. As of January 1, 2011, children will be allowed to bring peanut butter sandwiches for the 2011-2012 school year.
- **Reporting Suspected Abuse:** AZ state law says we must report suspected child abuse or neglect. We've always known this is our responsibility and while we've never had to file a report, we would, without hesitation, if we thought a child was in danger.
- **Employing Sunshine Staff:** from time to time, our staffers are available to you as baby sitters or house sitters. While we do not have a policy which prohibits our employees from working for our clients, we want you to understand that any arrangements you make are totally independent from the work we do at Sunshine School in Oro Valley, Inc. Sunshine will not be responsible for any difficulties which may result from these private situations.

B. OPERATING POLICIES:

- Sunshine is a weapons-free zone - and that includes toy weapons. There is also no smoking in or around the building.
- **Communication:** Sunshine sends its newsletters, calendars, and announcements to our families via e-mail. If you do not own a computer, we'll make arrangements to

print your material. This is one of Sunshine's endeavors to reduce, reuse, and recycle.

- Other areas of importance under or near the front ramada: we have a large mailbox where parents return our children's library books. You'll see laminate-protected bulletin boards with teachers' calendars & children's art & articles for parents to read. We have a cardboard box to collect cell phones and a big plastic bin to collect odds & ends for centers' projects. You'll also find a special garbage bin to collect plastic grocery bags & other clean plastics & film. We'd like to rid the world of these "urban tumbleweeds" so let Sunshine recycle those bags for you. Whenever you see material in the magazine rack, take a free copy.
- **Transportation:** Sunshine offers no transportation to/from other destinations. In the past, we have been an afternoon bus stop from Harelson Elementary School. Lately, we've had fewer & fewer children take advantage of this option, and so we've discontinued the bus stop as of June 1, 2011. If a need arises, we will be happy to explore this option in the future. Please do speak with us if you have further questions. Thanks.
- We do not take trips with the Sunshine kids. Sometimes, we go on supervised walks in the surrounding desert. Because the Health Dept. considers these excursions to be "field trips," teachers will ask you to complete a field trip consent form whenever the children walk off-site.
- You'll find triangular shelves behind the staff entrance door where you may store your child's car seat for the day. Label the seat.
- **Attendance:** if your child is ill or won't be attending, do call early in the a.m. — we worry. Do not bring a sick child to school; we'll send him right back home with you. If a child becomes ill during the day, he will be isolated & we'll call you ASAP.
- Use the Main Gate which faces the parking lot to enter school at any time of day. If no one is in attendance at the gate, ring the door bell which is on the right side of the gate; someone will come to open the gate and the door for you. Please be certain that the gate is securely closed after you enter and exit. Thanks.
- An adult signs a child in/out by writing the adult's name (not initials) & the time of admission/release on the proper attendance page. We also expect to see an "ETA" (**Estimated Time of Arrival**) and other pertinent daily info (today's phone # & the pick up person) written on the right-hand column of the page. If appropriate, sign your child onto the resting list. Take any information from the clear plastic pocket.
- Sunshine **assumes** that parents give the staff permission to sign their children in and out of the program. **THIS IS A GREAT BENEFIT TO YOU!** For instance, if you're transporting a sleeping baby in addition to your Sunshiner, give us a call. We'll meet you at your vehicle; walk your preschooler into school; and sign the attendance book for you. (We use this same process on inclement days.)
- We do not accept phone calls from parents in which verbal authorization is given for a child to go home with another person **WHO IS NOT LISTED ON YOUR CHILD'S REGISTRATION FORM**. So think ahead: we must have written permission from you & we will insist on photo I.D. from your designated person. (We do accept your faxed and signed permission note.)
- Parents may fill out a green permission slip to allow another person one-time access to your child (to take her/him home or bring him/her to school.) The blank forms

- are in the front pockets of each attendance book. Again, if we don't know this person, we'll be asking for photo I.D.
- Children - and you - say goodbye to one another outside the gate. While parents are certainly welcome at Sunshine, it is important training for both of you to learn to part, and our gate is just the spot for that sweet sorrow. Make simple routines for leaving or picking up your child. Don't get drawn into "Just one more hug or kiss or snuggle or . . ." Be kind and firm and ask for our help, if necessary, and then walk away. Call us later for an update. (After about 8 weeks, you'll wonder why this was ever a big deal. One dad used to wave to his daughters as they bounced happily into Sunshine, pleading "Miss me. . .")
 - Kids walk their own gear into and out of the building. It's their stuff and they should carry it.
 - When it's time to leave us in the afternoon, insist that your child tidy up his projects before she/he leaves with you. It's the right thing to do.
 - **Photography:** If a child is photographed or videotaped for Sunshine's in-house purposes or for a media story or for promotional material, we would **NOT** intentionally identify a child by name. If any name is used, it would be the child's first name only. **IF YOU HAVE OBJECTIONS OR CONCERNS, PLEASE CONTACT THE DIRECTOR.**
 - **Food:** parents provide nutritious snacks & lunches & beverages for their children. Sunshine will always provide drinking water. In August of each year, Sunshine will be happy to give each new student an insulated lunch sack; it remains with the child throughout his or her time @ Sunshine. (If the bag is lost, a replacement will cost \$10.) We want to see fresh, minimally-processed foods for lunch and snack items, not candy and high-fat/highly processed convenience food. You'll also send a nutritious drink and include a frozen ice pack to keep the lunch bog cold. The bags will stay in kids' cubbies. If you ever forget to send a lunch, we'll furnish a light but nutritious lunch for \$5.00. This is only for emergencies.
 - Eating **together** is an important part of our teaching program. This is the time to find solutions to real-life dilemmas: What do you do if your friend has peanut allergies - and you have a peanut butter sandwich? Can you eat food that has fallen on the floor? Should you leave the table before others are finished eating? Lots of education takes place during meal and snack times. We also love to have guests, so join us whenever you're in the neighborhood.
 - Because of allergies, children never share their food with others, and we do not allow purchased or home-baked treats for the children as part of birthday or other celebrations. However, we adults adore your home-made goodies! Please know that we'll always offer you hugs and smiles when you deliver homemade treats to us (and we'll never share with the children.)
 - **Class registration & placement:** Sunshine's upcoming school-year placements are usually filled by December of the *previous* year. We urge you to visit 3 or 4 other programs in addition to Sunshine; read all the material on this website; and then contact us with questions to be certain that we're the right place for your family. Unfortunately, because it's difficult to accept new children into Sunshine once the academic year has begun, we rarely have mid-year additions to our classes. (We will, however, register your baby for a Sunshine placement in the year 2014!)

- We place children in classes by their dates of birth AND by the parents' preferences for the number of days each week that the child can attend school (a 3-day or 4-day or Pre-K program). Parents cannot select a particular teacher.
- Sunshine reserves the right to remove a child from school when the health, emotions, &/or safety of that child, the staff, or other children are in danger. We will document the activities that concern us, meet with the family and child, propose alternatives and solutions, and refer to other professionals. When either the parent or Sunshine decides the child is not progressing, dis-enrollment will occur.
- For families of children with special needs, please speak with the Director. We'll discuss your goals & our abilities as teachers. Together, we'll determine if & how best we can care for your child.
- We encourage your child's therapist, doctor, or evaluator to come to Sunshine to see how your child functions here. Please call the Director to make arrangements.
- **Volunteering:** If you're able and inclined to do so, volunteers are always welcome. The State Department of Health will allow 2 visits per academic year. If you wish to participate more often, speak with the Director about our Volunteer Program. While attaining the requirements to volunteer can seem daunting, the rewards are priceless.
- **Charity work** is meant to involve the children. Children and parents and school join together to furnish a lesson in compassionate activism in helping alleviate the needs of others.
- **Books:** August - May, you'll be able to go online and order Scholastic books for your children - good books, reasonably priced, *and* Sunshine earns credit toward free books for our children's library. Often, we collaborate with a representative of Barefoot Books, too, and you'll find their unique offerings at www.tucsonbarefootkids.com.
- We have many books for YOU in our Parents' Library. Ask us to help you locate a book.
- We happily accept donations of good children's books for the Children's Library. Thank you.
- **Clothing:** All children's clothing needs to be easy-on & easy-off. Have you seen how far it is from the swings to the bathroom?
- Wet or soiled clothing will be bagged, labeled, and placed in your child's cubby. We'll stamp your attendance page with a message, "Wet clothing in cubby" so you'll remember.
- You are to provide an extra change of clothing for your child. It will be kept in a private, labeled box. Refill and change with the seasons as is necessary.
- **Odds & Ends:** the children practice a fire drill every month @ Sunshine; you should have a monthly drill at your house, too.
- Backpacks aren't allowed @ Sunshine. They are often BIGGER than the child, and they don't easily fit into our little cubbies. Backpacks are great for going off to kindergarten.
- Your child's toys, games, dolls, jewelry, etc., **stay home**. Label everything that does come into school (homework, clothing, resting blankets, etc.) We have a Lost & Found basket near classroom #4; check it whenever something is missing.

- See the Director if you wish to bring a live animal to school for "Show & Tell." We may have allergic children. Thanks for understanding.
- We know accidents happen, but if your child intentionally breaks our equipment, he/you will pay for the damage.

C. RESTING POLICY

Beginning January 1, 2010, all children who stay with us after 1 p.m. will lie down on our mats and rest until about 1:20 p.m. Some children will fall asleep and others just won't. We'll let the sleeping children continue to snooze until 2 p.m.; the other little ones will have quiet activities until that same time. (If you want your child to sleep past 2 p.m., let us know.)

D. ACCIDENT AND MEDICAL POLICIES:

Emergency medical procedures for parents, quoted from the 1/ 13/95 Newsletter:

We had a real scare Tuesday when little Kimberly fell while running and gashed her forehead on the water fountain. Kimberly will be fine, but this accident gave us (children and staff) an opportunity to discuss what happens in an emergency.

Probably 1/3 of the Tuesday Sunshine kids said they have had "stitches." We talked about all the blood and tears and being afraid - and about going to the hospital. In our staff meeting, we focused on keeping Sunshine as safe as possible. We also reviewed our First Aid procedures. We absolutely need your help! PLEASE:

- KEEP YOUR FILE UP-TO-DATE. MAKE CERTAIN WE HAVE A ROLODEX CARD WITH YOUR CURRENT PHONE NUMBERS. Minutes count when blood is flowing! It's your job to keep our information correct. Please ask for your file; change names, addresses, phone #s, doctors as needed. (In an emergency, I call your designated 1st & 2nd numbers listed on the registration form; then home &/or office numbers. Depending on the severity of the situation, I may call the relatives and friends listed on the back of your registration form.) When you are away from your usual phone number, let us know how we can reach you.
- We call 911 when we think the situation is critical. We will also call 911 after we use the Heimlich maneuver on a child. We will make every attempt to call you *first*.
- We'll pad the edge of the water fountain. But I can't pad the world and accidents will happen. I hope you are reassured by the fact that nearly 90% of our staff is trained in both CPR & First Aid. Our facility is regularly inspected (& approved) by the State for safety and cleanliness. BUT, if you have a concern about Sunshine's safety, please speak with me - I'll listen.
- If I call you with an emergency, I'll suggest you grab a friend to help you (you can't drive and hold your injured child). Please be assured that a Sunshine staff will accompany you to whichever medical facility you select. (We just can't stay for an extended period of time.)

So I guess the end of all this is: imagine an emergency at Sunshine. Your child is injured - and it's more than a Band-Aid can cover. Does your registration form give me current and correct information? Please come check your Sunshine file today. Be certain we know where you are and what you want done in an emergency. Speak with your children to reassure them that you (and the teachers) will always take good care of them. When accidents happen, everyone needs to be as calm and helpful and prepared as possible.

Additional medical notes:

- When a doctor prescribes antibiotics, a child may not return until 24 hours after the medication was begun. Also: a child may not return to Sunshine until 24 hours after his/her fever has reached its highest point ("spiked"). Even if a child is on antibiotics, he/she may not return until the fever (100° or more) is absent for at least 24 hours.
- If your child needs to take medication (OTC or prescribed), it must be brought to us in its original container, labeled with the child's full name. Beverly will have you complete a medication permit and we'll administer the meds as you have directed. The remainder will be returned to you at the end of the day. While sunscreen is no longer considered medication, we continue our policy of not dispensing sunscreen at school.

About head lice:

- The Sunshine staff will be vigilant to the outbreak of head lice in the community or within the Sunshine families.
- We will pay particular attention to children and adults who repeatedly scratch their heads throughout the day.
- We'll take these individuals aside to search for head lice.
- If lice are found, the child/adult will be isolated & sent home. Parents will be given instructions on how to treat (and possibly retreat) the infestation.
- A child may return to Sunshine after treatment & nit eradication.
- The child will be checked by a staffer as s/he reenters Sunshine.
- If the child is deemed safe, he may return to school. S/he will be closely observed for itching during the day(s).
- The child's parents will be called if re-infestation is suspected.

F. PLAY YARD SAFETY RULES:

Generally:

- All children need to wear appropriate footwear in order to play safely in the play yard. Flip-flops are not appropriate. Sandals must have a heel strap. Athletic shoes are best.
- Girls should wear shorts under their skirts and dresses.
- We walk, not run, on the patios and on the garden paths.
- We don't climb on our trees or pull on the limbs or pick off the leaves or flowers.
- We don't disturb the ants or bees or lizards or spiders.
- We call or find an adult when we need help.

Swings:

- Enter & exit the swing area by walking up / down the steps.
- Never walk or play or run in front of the swings.
- Kids swing with their feet pointing toward school.
- Adults, not children, give pushes.
- Children wait for turns by sitting on the little low wall or by playing under the umbrella.
- Turns are 5 minutes long.
- No tummy swinging or twisting.
- Exit to the front & walk around the swing set.

Red wooden benches:

- Sit on the benches.
- Walk around the benches to access the patio or play yard.
- No hopping over the benches or walking on the benches.

Tire:

- Climb by yourself. Parents & teachers won't help.
- The limit is two kids @ a time on top of the tire, sitting down.
- Look first, and then lay on your tummy and slide down / off feet first.
- No toys on / around the tire.
- No hiding inside the tire.

Climber rules:

- Keep hands & feet to yourself.
- Hang by hands, not knees.
- Drop down, feet first.
- Girls wear shorts under their skirts if they're prone to hanging upside down on the climber.
- Once you drop, you must exit.

Ball rules:

- balls are used on special days in a particular area;
- children do not tag one another with balls;
- kids don't try to kick/toss balls over the wall.

Digging area:

- keep the sand down. No digging / tossing the sand in the air;
- digging tools are to be used properly.

Bikes:

- Four children may ride bikes.
- Four children are waiting to ride; they sit on the green bench.
- Feet stay on the bike pedals.
- A child may begin once the child ahead gets to the top of the loop at the brick path.
- Each child may take three trips around the trail.

Sunshine School: Rates for 2011 - 2012

Sunshine's annual fees:

- a. The non-refundable registration fee for THE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM (August through May) is \$150. Additionally, there's a supply fee of \$85 per semester (refundable on a pro-rated basis if you leave us.) Registration and supply fees are not subject to reductions when multiple siblings attend school at the same time.

Monthly tuition for preschool, 2011 - 2012 (9 a.m. to noon or 12:30 p.m.):

- a. A 3-day preschool program = \$360.00 a month; extra classes are \$35 each.
- b. The Monday through Thursday preschool classes are \$480/month; add a Friday class for \$35.

Hourly care: from August - May, childcare is \$2.50 per half-hour for any of the time between 7 & 8:45 a.m., and after 12 or 12:30 p.m. If your child is with us for only a few minutes within a half-hour block of time, we will be charging you that \$2.50 fee.

- Sunshine School is supported by tuition and care fees, making it extremely important that these charges are paid in a timely manner. Tuition fees are due on or about the first day of the month; the weekly newsletter to parents will remind you of the exact date. Hourly child care payments are due bimonthly. If payment is not made on time, we add a late fee of \$25 to your next bill. Your child may not be admitted after the second late payment unless you have made financial arrangements with the Director.
- Sunshine is open from 7a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday - Friday during the academic year, August through May. Please do not bring children before 7 a.m. If you will be later than closing (6:00 p.m.), you must call. You will be billed \$30 for each half hour after closing time, even if you're late by only 1 minute and even if you have called us. (After two late nights, the Director will be contacting you.) Because this is such a frightening situation for your child, don't let it occur. Also, if you forget to sign in/out & we can't remember a valid time, you will be charged either from 7a.m. or to 6:00 p.m.
- Please deposit checks into the secure metal "Payments" boxes at the Main & North Gates or into the box mounted on the interior wall near the front desk. Thank you.
- There is a \$35.00 fee for a returned check.
- When two siblings attend Sunshine at the same time, we'll reduce tuition (on the lesser fee) and the hourly child care by 10%. If a third child attends at the same time; your reduction is 20%.
- A parent needs to give Sunshine a 2-week notice before withdrawing from school. Otherwise, you will be liable for the entire month of tuition. (We hope that you would have spoken with the director *long* before any of this is necessary.)
- Scholarship aide is available on a limited basis. Please see the Director to discuss financial arrangements.
- We do not give credit for days absent due to illness or vacation. We also do not "switch" days. We do refund/credit your account when we make a bookkeeping error. If you are moving away and have a substantial credit in your account, we'll be pleased to issue a check. (Of course, if you'd like to donate the amount to Sunshine, we would give you a big hug.)
- You may / should rent school for a birthday party or other event. The price is reasonable for our families: \$50 for a 4-hr block of time. (Others may pay a different rate; call the Director for details.) The kids love coming here; and the mess *isn't* @ your house.
- **Donating to Sunshine:** Sunshine was incorporated in 1984 as a 501c3 not-for-profit corporation. Our EIN is 74-2350552. Any person or group or foundation may bless Sunshine with money or goods. We issue letters of receipt for donations over \$250.
 - Raytheon parents: I believe that your company matches donations you make to us, so please consider this as doubling your largess to Sunshine.
 - Sunshine is a United Way recipient organization. Check with your H.R. department; they will set up a donation schedule that's suits your parameters.
 - Unfortunately, because we don't have a kindergarten, Sunshine does not qualify for the AZ. State tax credit.

Sunshine is pleased to acknowledge a gracious donation from the *Thomas and Jeanne Elmezzi Private Foundation*. We are thankful for their generous support of our guest teacher program.

Units of Study

Each year, we concentrate on three fields of study. First semester, we focus on "Communities Near & Far," and that often includes talking about our families and about each

of us as individuals. In January and February, we celebrate "Literature" in all its glorious forms. (Of special interest in February: LOVE OF READING. Parents, family members, and principals of the local schools read to us every day and we adore it.) From early March through the end of school in May, we explore the "Natural Sciences," concentrating on our desert environment. Please understand that each teacher interprets these units differently, per the interests & abilities of the class. We welcome your cooperation, so call the Director if you'd like to offer your expertise. Thank you.

Curricula for academic programs

Teachers use the following curriculum to develop projects for the children. Because we believe all early childhood education should be both age AND individually appropriate, teachers adapt the curriculum to fit the needs of each class & each child. Some of our 3 year old children don't know which end of a pencil is usable; some of our 5's can add in their heads! Both are normal and welcome @ Sunshine. We also recognize the critical importance of unstructured play. Therefore, before & after preschool and during recess, we encourage the children to just have fun doing whatever they wish. At these times, our work is to observe the children, help them when necessary, and keep them safe. Because social development is rapid at this age, we include an affective section in our curriculum. In 2000, we added a "Life Skills" component, highlighting many of the necessary tasks children learn both at home and at school. You'll notice that we don't offer computer work to our children. We think that they'll use computers all their lives, but the joys and lessons of childhood are available for only a few, brief years. REMEMBER: AT NO TIME DO WE EXPECT MASTERY OF CURRICULUM ITEMS. The academic curriculum is simply a guideline.

1. **Cognition** (things to know).
 - A. **Language development. How to:**
 1. follow directions
 2. listen attentively in different situations
 3. identify colors
 4. use age-appropriate sentence structure
 5. talk with others about personal experiences
 6. share self-expression & creativity through dictation of stories
 7. visually discriminate between likenesses & differences
 8. categorize things by groups
 9. follow left-to-right, top-to-bottom progressions
 10. identify upper- & lower-case alphabet letters
 11. discriminate between sounds
 12. associate letter symbols with sounds
 13. identify & use rhyming words, synonyms & antonyms
 14. describe the sequence of a story
 15. comprehend a story
 16. predict outcomes in varied situations
 - B. **Mathematical skills. How to:**
 1. distinguish & describe shapes
 2. do rote counting, 0 - 20 +
 3. identify the written symbols, 0 - 10 +
 4. understand left and right

5. experience /describe spatial relationships
 6. describe / compare attributes of things
 7. sort and match
 8. arrange items in a series or pattern
 9. understand a one-to-one correspondence
 10. write numbers with no model
 11. relate the written symbol with the number of objects in a group
 12. understand concepts of addition and subtraction
 13. understand parts and whole
 14. understand that money has value
 15. identify articles of measurement: ruler, scale, thermometer, etc.
- C. Physical goals: development of**
1. large muscle coordination by hopping, skipping, jumping, bouncing balls, etc
 2. non-locomotor or anchored movement by bending, twisting, rocking, swinging one's arms etc.
 3. small muscle coordination by holding a writing implement correctly, coloring & drawing, using detail in pictures, using clay, cutting, etc.
 4. eye-hand coordination by doing puzzles, sorting small objects, connecting dots, tracing, etc.
- D. Arts & sciences: to experience**
1. child-centered cooking projects
 2. art classes with our art specialist
 3. dancing, poetry, drama,
 4. self-expression through role-playing, pretending; imitation of actions & sounds: music, movement, singing
 5. personal exploration through the appropriate use of sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell
 6. simple musical and rhythmic instruments
 7. self-awareness: body, health, and emotions
 8. appropriate safety measures
 9. understanding and respect for our environment
 10. animal and plant studies
 11. simple astronomy and history
 12. the concepts of time and routine
- 2. The affective realm (social development).**
- A. Personal and group relationships: to develop**
1. ability in making & expressing choices, plans, and decisions
 2. problem-solving skills encountered in daily situations
 3. competency in taking care of one's own needs
 4. appropriate self-expression of feelings and needs
 5. willingness to participate in large and small group, and solitary activities
 6. empathy for the needs and feelings of others
 7. positive relationships with Sunshine children and adults
 8. civility through politeness and the use of simple manners
 9. ability to eat together in a socially appropriate manner
 10. a sense of commitment to the family & Sunshine by taking responsibility for daily tasks
 11. a sense of commitment to the community by participating in charitable projects
 12. respect for all people
- 3. Life Skills**
- 1. Nutritional aspects: to learn**
- a. the difference between healthful "everyday" food & the "sometimes" fun food
 - b. how to clean up spills
 - c. how to set & clear the table
 - d. how to experience new foods by using all 5 senses, then taking a bite or two

2. **Safety issues: how to**
 - a. ride safely in a vehicle
 - b. recognize the symbols for poisonous or dangerous substances
 - c. avoid guns, lighters, matches, dangerous implements
 - d. stay close to an adult in public places
 - e. call 911; scream for help/run away when necessary
 - f. exit buildings during a fire drill
 - g. protect a baby sibling from harmful situations
3. **Social situations: to develop**
 - a. manners by saying "Please" & "Thank you" and by writing thank-you notes & invitations
 - b. comfort in saying "Hello" & "Good-bye" to friends (both children & adults)
 - c. phone manners: learning not to interrupt when an adult is speaking on the phone; how to safely and politely answer the telephone
 - d. an understanding of when it's appropriate to share OR to take turns
 - e. the habit that we knock on a closed door before entering a room
 - f. the conceptual difference between borrowing & stealing
 - g. an understanding that tattling, whining, and lying are rarely appropriate
 - h. strategies for dealing with bullies
4. **Personal tasks: how to**
 - a. dress/undress: put on socks/shoes; select proper clothing for the environment
 - b. comb hair, brush teeth, wash hands, etc.
 - c. blow noses and cough without spreading germs
 - d. tend to bumps, scratches, bleeding, insect bites; know how to stay calm & when to get help in an emergency
 - e. protect yourself in the Arizona environment
 - f. respect others by being punctual (and that includes getting ready for school on time)
 - g. help with housekeeping: sweeping, dusting, washing windows, etc;
 - h. help with the laundry: gathering soiled items, folding & returning clothing
 - i. care for pets
 - j. tend a garden
 - k. engage in sustainability practices, such as recycling, composting, harvesting rainwater, etc
 - l. develop an "I CAN DO IT!" attitude

(We selected and adapted components from the "Key Learning Experiences," published by High/Scope Press. We also acknowledge the National Association for the Education of Young Children for contributing significantly to our educational philosophy.)

The Sunshine faculty has worked with many children, so we've observed a wide range of development in 3-, 4-, and 5-year-old children. If we suspect your sweetheart would benefit from some type of therapy, we'll speak with you about a referral. We acknowledge that this information may cause you discomfort, but our intent is to help every child grow well. Early intervention is best.

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY DRAWINGS

Written in 2006 by Barbara Rosano, now our art teacher emeritus.

On the following page you can see stages of development, beginning with "named scribbles." Many examples of "disordered scribbling" preceded these drawings. They were usually made with colored markers on big sheets of paper taped to the floor.

All of the drawings shown here were created independently at home over a three year period, beginning at age two. I couldn't fit the work of all four children into the space, so I chose a boy and a girl. I think you can see which is which.

Both children went through the same stages of development:

- Disordered scribbling
- Controlled scribbling
- Naming of scribbles
- Symbolic representation
- Attempts at Visual representation

At the bottom of the page are examples of "controlled scribbling" in which the children named images that they discovered in the marks they made on the paper. They didn't attempt to form images; they found them.

In the stage of "symbolic representation," the children began to express thought, feelings, and perceptions of themselves and their environment as they gained small motor control.

Although both children moved through the same stages of development, their individuality emerged at an early age. With every dot, line, and shape, they were involved in a process that was uniquely their own. From my own children I learned that when they are allowed to control the process, their art is a reflection of themselves. I find it fascinating to see the path of development in each child when the drawings are placed in chronological order.

CREATING AN ART AREA AT HOME

The ability of children to learn, explore, and express themselves freely is especially evident in the early years. Giving them opportunities to work with art materials independently sets them on a path of creative and mental growth that lasts a lifetime.

Setting up an art area for my four preschoolers was rewarding for all of us. Their work area was next to the kitchen, and materials were always available. The art area included table, chairs, and art supplies that they could reach and use at any time. They learned to take care of supplies and clean up, as your children are taught to do in art class. (It took enthusiasm and vigilance on my part to make it work, just as it does in the art room.)

The first materials on the children's shelves were colored markers and paper; then playdough and oil pastels; then glue and scissors. Paints were added when needed and appropriate. Sculpture supplies were kept in a big box, and large activities took place outside. Big appliance boxes became houses that the children painted with tempera (poster) paints.

All of our children are different, and we all work differently with them. The important thing is that we give them opportunities to have fun and grow through art. As you know, the rewards are great for them and for us.

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT AS SEEN IN THE DRAWINGS
OF TWO CHILDREN



The philosophy section follows. Read all the articles & ponder if the sentiments "feel right." If so, Sunshine would be a good preschool for you -

Things I've learned About Kids and Childcare, 1988:

1. Parting can be sweet, loud, & tearful sorrow. Please: give your child one hug, one kiss, one smile; say "See you (whenever);" and LEAVE! We'll call you if there's a problem.
2. Forget cute clothes and fancy shoes. Kids should wear old, comfortable stuff and tough shoes. Can your child change into /out of the clothing to go to the bathroom? Do you mind if mud or paint comes home on shirts or shorts? AND: jewelry, scarves, and belts disappear. So please send us regular play kids; we'll have a great time.
3. For resting, a teddy bear, small blanket, and one or two books may be useful. These should be labeled; items stay in cubbies until needed.
4. We don't necessarily "share." We take turns. There's a big difference! Kids here have the right to say, "No, thank you. You can play next, but I'm playing with ... now." (The children may not be rude or unkind when they say this.)
5. We teach our Sunshine Kids to tell the OTHER PERSON FIRST when there's a problem. "Please don't do that! It hurts me. I don't like that." If words don't work, then kids go to a teacher. We want children to be sensitive to another's situation and feelings; we also think kids can handle many of their own problems.
6. We explain things to kids in a reasonable manner, and we have marvelous discussions! But we'll make you a deal: you believe only $\frac{1}{2}$ the stuff they tell you about preschool & we'll believe about $\frac{1}{2}$ the incredible stuff they tell us about YOU! We definitely believe in open communication, however, so always talk to us about your concerns.
7. We use logical consequences, the if-you-do-this, then-this-will-happen approach. KIDS HAVE CHOICES AND THERE ARE RESULTS. We are consistent on this and it works. Time-outs help, too, for quiet thinking.
8. Simple, nutritious lunches are best. And, please, don't send anything adults need to open, slice, or heat; we just don't have the time and our license doesn't allow us to slice or heat (that would be "preparing" food.) Kids need to be able to handle lunch without frustration. We encourage your child to pack his lunch (with your wisdom guiding him.)
9. Kids are naturally curious about their world. Intricate, elaborate toys are not necessary; blocks are. Playtime can be the most valuable learning situation for a young child. Ask your child to explain his play to you—what a joy!
10. Art is a basic necessity at Sunshine School. Our projects are creative and educational; the kids just think they're having fun! We don't encourage neatness or perfection. Enjoyment and learning from the process are infinitely more important than the finished product.
11. We work! Everyone helps to pick up toys, put away resting things, clean up after lunch, and wash windows (cars, too!)
12. Kids go to the bathroom alone. Teachers do not wipe bottoms.
13. We invite you to share your interests with us. Would you like to come and show us how you: play the sax, bake bread, use a drill? We'd love it! You are welcome here anytime.

What I Learned in 1989:

Your children are loving, intelligent people; each parent cares tremendously about the academic and emotional well-being of his/her child. But please always remember: **YOU ARE THE PARENT. YOU ARE IN CHARGE.** The boundaries and examples you set for your family will come to fruition when your child is a teenager.

When you say "yes" to whatever, that's wonderful! When you say "no," be firm and consistent. Kids know how to handle parents, so be aware and thoughtful when using rules and constructive discipline.

I really think, also, that we do not improve a child's life by giving him every possible advantage without the balancing effect of responsibility and empathy.

Lastly, please do not let your children completely dominate your time. Make time for *you*, spend time with *your spouse*; hire sitters and go out! Forget the guilt. The children will survive.

EXCERPTS FROM THE MAY 3, 1993, NEWSLETTER

Next year (1994) will mark Sunshine's 10th anniversary - and that makes me smile. Many of our teachers have been here most of the time. We've often cared for the 2nd or 3rd child in the same family!

I have come to view Sunshine as a community service, not just a preschool. We try to help many people (did you know that musicians practice here - late at night? Girl Scouts meet here on weekends; a townhouse association holds its annual meeting at Sunshine. Once, a lovely reception took place here...) It's important for us to help the community and our families; for kids to help each other; for businesses to invest in education. These are the real life lessons of being empathetic and responsible.

Thank you for being with us. Even if your time at Sunshine is short, you'll still be here, in our minds and in our hearts. You are always our friend and part of the Sunshine Family.

Words of (a little) Wisdom from 1991...

Relax, sweet parents, and make an effort to enjoy your young children. Honestly, seems like the proverbial "yesterday" that my kids were 4 and 5 years old. Now they are ready to leave. (Me too; I'm ready for them to leave!) With love in my heart, I know it's time to be brave and wish them well.

Parents' work is always the same: preparing a child to leave the safety of the family and survive on his/her own. Some of you leave the Sunshine Family now, ready for public school and its demands. And while you may never see us again, be assured you will always have a place - here -- to call home. I think we never lose anyone; people just move away for a while. We teachers reminisce and smile. Our friends stay with us...

Time for some mental housekeeping on my part: "Things I wish I had done with my kids at an early age." Maybe you can grab one or two, because I wish I/my sons had:

- b. gone on little vacations just to see new things
- c. gone on a big vacation to the Smithsonian Museums
- d. spent time by lakes, oceans, rivers
- e. had the grandparents closer to us
- f. lounged in the grass, listening to jazz
- g. eaten weird food
- h. slept out on the patio, together, under the stars
- i. taken more family pictures
- j. planted a little vegetable garden
- k. learned better manners
- l. eaten in really snazzy restaurants (once a year)
- m. become more informed and responsible about money

It was only fair to ask the boys what they wished I had done, right? Their replies:

- ◆ "I wish Dad and you made better arrangements for me to go to college. You two didn't communicate well at all." (from Matt. He's right.)
- ◆ "I wish you had helped me be more sensitive to other people, like my brothers." (said Adam. He's learning sensitivity now that he has a terrific girlfriend.)
- ◆ "I wish we had more meal times together, that tradition..." (from Chris, and I totally agree.)

What can I say... we all do the best we can with what we have. None of us need feel guilty ever. But the rest of the story is to be aware of long-range goals when our children are young; enjoy the moments of living; encourage spontaneity; seek honesty; smile and cry together.

Thoughts about 5-year olds who will go to Kindergarten:

(from a February 2, 2010, letter to parents)

Dear Parents,

Your child will go to public school in the fall. Over the years, we've noticed some strange behavior by our 4- & 5-year olds. I thought I should share our observations with you, and so since 1997, this letter has gone home to parents.

This is not a scientific study, but MANY of our oldest kids:

1. know they're leaving Sunshine School, YOU, and their familiar and safe environments. They're frightened! The kids just "feel" this; you may never

have mentioned public school.

2. act inappropriately. Example: a perfectly independent child starts clinging

to your leg, wants to be picked up, demands more of your time, and cries about any little thing. He or she might begin "elaborating" or "fibbing."

You

would think you had a two-year old again!

3. want and need positive attention. You can and should validate their concerns – this is a huge step for them! Acknowledge their growth; reinforce their self-esteem; do not permit improper behavior.

4. need to see their new school, take a walk around the playground, and have you read them stories about the first day of school. Let them tell you a story about what they expect will happen. Write it down and let them illustrate the story.

Keep it handy and when school begins, revise the story with reality.

5. need to use and respond to an alarm clock. Additionally, our oldest children are capable of packing their lunches the night before preschool (YOU offer the healthy choices from which she/he may select items.) Likewise, our Sunshine children should be selecting their own clothing and dressing themselves (It's preschool! We have no fashion sense. . .)

Love your child. Accept the insecurities. Remember, aloud, your first day of kindergarten or college. Encourage growth and answer all those questions. But please, do not let inappropriate behavior become upsetting to you or to them. A little firmness may be in order.

It is your responsibility to contact the public school. Find the dates for kindergarten registration; ask if you may observe in the classroom. Reassure yourself! And understand that for the next 12 years, your child will be in the care of these individuals. Schools cannot furnish the education you wish. YOU need to be involved in your school and supplement its work, always.

Please remember that it's your job to prepare your beautiful babies to leave you successfully, whether they're 3 (going to preschool); 5 (off to kindergarten); 18 (packing for college); or 30 (marrying and moving far away.) I promise that you will miss them always. . . Love, Sue.

Tracy Dobbin, long-time Sunshine teacher, mom, and a private tutor, wrote the following paper in October, 2004. She gathered information from many sources in our professional library. It's a wonderful overview of your child's work while @ Sunshine.

Skills Learned in Preschool Last a Lifetime

Here are some of the most important things your child is learning at preschool:

How to be a student

Children quickly learn their teacher's expectations and how to function at school. They learn how to conduct themselves in a classroom and other settings and how to be a part of a group. Your children have learned about acceptable behavior in different settings (story time or circle time, art, centers, snack and recess) and the rules and procedures of Sunshine. They know where to put their personal belongings upon entering school, the routine for hand washing, and how to line up before school starts. They have learned how to sit in a

particular manner so that everyone can see and to raise their hands when they wish to speak. They also know the clean-up routine and manners expected at snack time. They are learning

that what may be acceptable during recess is off limits inside the building. Ask your child about the bike rules. He or she can probably tell you that you have to first wait your turn on the green bench until a bike or scooter becomes available. Then, you must begin at the starting line and proceed around the bike path in the direction of the arrows until you have gone around three times at which time you need to park your bike so that another child can have a turn.

Children also learn that they must exercise self-control. They can't just wander around the school doing whatever they would like. Rather than reacting immediately to a situation, the children are learning to regulate their behavior and emotions by taking time to think, reflect and delay gratification. This can be difficult at age three, but your children are making progress.

How to get along with others

Preschool offers opportunities for children to learn how to develop social skills and to connect with others without the help of a parent. Preschoolers learn how to approach other

children, to initiate conversations and to be comfortable around their peers. They learn how to cooperate, negotiate and settle differences by expressing their feelings and empathizing with others. These social or interpersonal skills are essential for emotional well-being and academic success.

How to be independent

Children learn how to take responsibility for themselves and to perform tasks independently. The children take care of their own belongings, clean up after themselves, dress and use the bathroom independently, and complete their projects by themselves. At recess, they learn to navigate their way up the climber dome and tire. When children discover they are capable of many things, their confidence grows and it motivates them to tackle the next challenge. Although children need a lot of encouragement and modeling, they must be allowed to do things independently so they can learn through the process. As children take on more responsibility, they gain a sense of power and control over their environment and great satisfaction.

How to tell a story

Picture storybooks support children's development at the preschool level in many ways:

- stimulate children's imagination by introducing them to a wide range of experiences
- increase children's knowledge and understanding of other times and cultures and connect them to their own culture
- teach children about narrative structures such as plot sequences, story language, and character development
- provide children with good examples of oral language and expand their vocabulary and storytelling abilities
- develop children's thinking skills and problem solving abilities
- increase children's appreciation of literature and promote a love of reading

Early experiences with books have a large influence on children's success in learning to read in later years. Pre-literacy involves far more than the ability to identify letters, numbers, or shapes. It includes skills such as oral language, the awareness of sounds, knowledge of the alphabet, and an understanding of common print concepts.

How to ask for help

Children learn to be more assertive and to ask for help when they need something or when another child is bothering them. They learn to rely on their peers and adults outside their family. These early experiences will help them develop good relationships with others once they enter kindergarten. Your children are learning that Sunshine is a safe community and that there is always someone available to help.

How to draw, paint, cut, and paste

When given art materials, children have an opportunity to express their creativity while developing their fine motor skills. Small muscle development is critical during the preschool years and will help them once they enter kindergarten and begin forming their letters.

How to build with blocks and construction materials

Because blocks can be used in a variety of ways, children learn important spatial skills and gain hands-on math experience. When playing with blocks and other manipulatives, children learn sorting, classifying, and patterning. They also give children a foundation for understanding division, fractions, and geometry in later years.

How to use their bodies in a variety of ways

Preschoolers have many opportunities during recess to strengthen their muscles and improve their coordination. Running, swinging, jumping, and playing with balls are fun ways in which the children learn how to control their bodies and develop large motor skills. Sunshine children also participate in yoga and sign language, music and dance. When children use muscles during exercise, they also engage specific areas of the brain. Movement helps to form neural pathways for cognitive development, problem solving, and creativity. Movement is the only thing that unites all brain levels and integrates the right and left hemispheres in children.

How to investigate and explore

Preschoolers need many opportunities for hands-on, active learning. They are natural scientists and need time to explore, investigate, and experiment at their own pace and in their own way. Children develop new concepts or ideas when given an opportunity to engage in the process of discovery. The children are "learning how to learn" as they engage in developmentally appropriate play and respond to their surrounding environment.

Finally, from Sue: don't forget to:

- go on a date with your spouse. Use sitters. You & the children should have time apart.
- mark your calendar with our closure dates; you'll need those sitters.
- ask questions of the staff & director. Don't stew about a problem that may be very easily solved. Communication makes/breaks any relationship.
- be flexible in your relationship with Sunshine. You're joining a family. Our routines (and the furniture) shift regularly when we find a better way to accomplish our goals.

Websites we like:

www.hwtears.com

(pencil grip & handwriting philosophy with Occupational Therapy input)

www.braingym.com

(OT-influenced exercises to help kids use both sides of their brains)

www.bal-a-vis-x.org

(balance/auditory/visual exercises using balls & beanbags; these help kids focus)

www.loveandlogic.com

(a parenting philosophy utilizing love & logical consequences)

www.kidfoundation.org (info re Sensory Processing Disorder - and quite a few kids/adults have SPD)
www.parentkidsright.com (Dr. Marilyn Heins, Tucson pediatrician, answers questions about child-rearing)
www.highscope.org (an independent, non-profit early-childhood research foundation)
www.sunshineschooltucson.org OR www.sunshineschoolorovalley.org , so you can see all our beautiful children!

Recent statistics assert that one in every 150 children is diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and boys are four times more likely than girls to have a form of the neurological disorder (Autism Society of America 2006.) You or a friend may have need of these websites, too:

www.autism.org

www.autism-society.org

www.autisminspiration.org

www.autismspeaks.org

www.autismcenter.org

www.easterseals.com

www.sandbox-learning.com