



Smaller Scholars  
**MONTESSORI**  
*Academy*

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**Teaching a Lifelong Love of Learning**

Parent/Family Handbook  
2016-2017

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Teaching a Lifelong Love of Learning

## **WELCOME**

Thank you for enrolling your child in Smaller Scholars Montessori Academy. As a premier leader in Montessori education we are proud and privileged to have your family as part of our school community. Your questions, concerns and comments are extremely important to us. To address any issue, please do not hesitate to contact any school administrator. We look forward to an exciting partnership in teaching your child a lifelong love of learning.

## **PURPOSE STATEMENT**

Smaller Scholars Montessori Academy provides a carefully planned, stimulating environment which will help the children develop within themselves the foundational habits, attitudes, skills and ideas which are essential for a lifetime of creative thinking and learning.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Smaller Scholars Montessori Academy's mission is to provide your child with an environment that nurtures and encourages him/her to grow intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically and to cultivate a lifetime love of learning.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

The basic idea in the Montessori philosophy of education is that all children carry within themselves the person they will become. In order to develop his physical, intellectual, and spiritual potential to the fullest, the child must have freedom – freedom that is achieved through the order of the prepared environment and the self-discipline of the child.

Dr. Montessori recognized that the only valid impulse to learning is the self-motivation of the child. Children move themselves toward learning. The teachers prepare the environment, direct the activity and offer the stimulation, but it is the *child* who learns, who is motivated through work itself to persist in a given task. If Montessori children are free to learn, it is because they have acquired an inner discipline from their exposure to both physical and mental order. This is the core of Dr. Montessori's philosophy. Patterns of concentration and thoroughness, established in early childhood produce a confident, competent learner in later years. Montessori education teaches children to observe, to think, to judge. It introduces children to the joy of learning at an early age and provides a framework in which intellectual and social discipline go hand-in-hand.

## **STAFF AND FACULTY**

Smaller Scholar's staff is dedicated to encouraging self-directed, competent, caring, and enthusiastic learners. All of our lead teachers are Montessori certified and have a bachelor's degree. In addition, all teachers and assistants are CPR and First Aid certified. We provide on-going support and training for all staff members. We are extremely proud of our professional and caring team of teachers and administrators at Smaller Scholars Montessori Academy – they make a difference.

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## **MONTESSORI PROGRAM**

### **INFANT PROGRAM**

Infants need not only love and emotional nurturing and a healthy physical environment, but also an environment which promotes their very real need to learn. The Montessori Teaching Method provides a basis for individualized learning activities, appropriate for even the earliest stages of a child's development.

The daily needs of the infant, such as diapering, feeding and bathing are the optimal times for interaction, cooperation, intimacy and mutual enjoyment. Using these times for social learning experiences encourage full participation of the infant and the caregiver. These times become the opportunity for much communication and for nurturing. As the infant is “refueled” by such attentive, caring interaction, he is ready to explore the world around him with minimal intervention from adults.

The Montessori caregiver lays the foundation of positive social learning by introducing the “Grace and Courtesy” lessons before the more academic lessons are given and she also refrains from interrupting the child's work. Giving the infant time, attention, trust and respect is the foundation of the Montessori philosophy.

The purpose of the Infant Development Program at Smaller Scholars Montessori Academy is to encourage, assist, and protect the normal development of each child. The primary goals include development of movement and independence. Children in the Program will flourish in prepared environments which respect, support and respond to their basic needs for independence, exploration and the building of trust and self-esteem.

We believe that any kind of group child care will not work without the cooperation between caregivers and the parents. Parental involvement is stressed; parents know their child better than anyone else. Parents and caregivers must feel comfortable in exchanging knowledge and experience about the child.

During the early years of life, Dr. Maria Montessori felt that "the first thing the child's education demands is the provision of an environment in which he or she can develop the powers given by nature". Quite literally, the school environment IS the curriculum.

The structure of the curriculum is based on five developmental areas: Sensory and Perceptual, Physical and Motor, Self-help Skills, Language, and Social and Emotional. Dr. Maria Montessori emphasized the need for a rich environment. While providing a structured and thus familiar environment, the needs of individual children are met.

#### **Sensory and Perception**

The young child absorbs the world around him or her through the five senses, and a rich environment should cater to the child's senses.

#### **Physical and Motor**

Infants have a sensitive period for movement. They are born with an innate desire to move and master control of their bodies; it requires no instruction from caregivers. Along with the mind, both fine and gross motor

skills develop rapidly from three months to three years. Attention to these needs supports balanced development. Physical activity in the young child is an important part of environmental involvement, and thus education.

An infant's natural movements are never restricted by placing them in containers such as bouncy seats, swings or walkers. They are never put into a position they cannot get into and out of themselves. Infants roll onto their stomachs when they are ready to be on their stomachs, and infants crawl onto the climber by their initiative alone.

By providing developmentally appropriate movement opportunities and maintaining a safe environment that does not restrict the exploration for the infants in the classroom, motor development is allowed to unfold naturally and at the infants' own pace.

### **Self-Help Skills**

The focus is on helping the child enjoy independence; each individual must depend on himself or herself for education. Movement and independence are guided by respect for the infant's competence. The infant is considered to be an initiator, an explorer and self-learner. Caregivers are sensitive observers - available when direct help is needed, but not intrusive while the infant solves his own problems. A physically safe, cognitively challenging, and emotionally nurturing environment is provided for the infant. The infant is allowed to do what he is ready and willing to do. Instead of placing an object in the hand of a four month old who is learning to reach and grasp, the aware caregiver places a graspable object within reach of the infant, allowing him to initiate, practice and eventually master the skill of reaching and grasping. When an infant drops a toy, the adult waits for the infant to initiate retrieving the toy, instead of getting it and handing it to him. The infant is encouraged and allowed to problem solve and to reach the goal himself, instead of having this opportunity taken away from him by the well-meaning adult. The infants are allowed to do what they are ready and willing to do.

### **Language**

The construction of vocabulary is a part of every aspect of the classroom from snack time to manipulating a toy to group activities. The infant brain is wired to learn multiple languages concurrently and effortlessly. Maria Montessori referred to this as a child having a window of opportunity to easily "absorb" languages from birth through six years of age. To make the most of this fleeting opportunity, the infant hears language spoken by their teachers all day, as well as, being spoken to in sign language. Research tells us that an infant's brain is wired with the receptors to learn any language and develop those languages if a person is consistently speaking to them. By learning sign language infants have the tools they need to use to express themselves in sign before they are able to express themselves verbally, thus eliminating some frustration felt by the infants.

### **Social and Emotional**

A well rounded and happy child, whose balanced development and happiness have been supported by responsive individual attention, reacts positively with the environment, copes with frustration, and learns easily. All areas of our curriculum are reinforced by the infant caregivers' observation and reflection. Caregivers reinforce the infant's self-initiated activities by paying full attention, while being quietly available. This results in the caregiver appreciating and enjoying what the infants actually do. Occasional reflections made by the caregiver, such as, "You touched the ball and it rolled away," reassure the child of the adults' full attention. A joyful smile when the infant solves a problem conveys pleasure in his success. The caregiver says



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what she sees. Internal guidance is valued in the infant. Gentle validations are used to encourage rather than the use of instructions, criticism and praise. A predictable balance of togetherness and separateness is achieved which benefits both the infants and the adults.

Again, giving the infants time, attention, trust and respect is the foundation of the Montessori philosophy. The goal is the “authentic child” - one who feels secure, autonomous and competent.

“Movement is the primary way of engaging the child with his environment. Each child has a mission. If he cannot use his organs of movement then he cannot manifest his mission.” -- Maria Montessori

“When they are ready, they will do it.” – Maria Montessori

### **TODDLER PROGRAM**

In this warm and caring environment, the children continue their understanding of the world around them, forming their intelligence. During this period of the “absorbent mind” (0-6 years), the children gather knowledge through employing all their senses to experience their environment. This natural and spontaneous learning process allows them to explore and learn without being hampered by trying to understand instructions in a language they are just beginning to understand. They begin acquiring language naturally, learning the names of things that they are experiencing every day. Through movement they develop body awareness and primary motor coordination. They learn to care for themselves and for their environment, which develops a sense of order and fosters independence and self-reliance. Most importantly, they gain a love of learning.

Our toddler program engages your child through a variety of activities in the areas of music and movement, art, and practical life activities. There are some materials that are present for refining the senses – awareness of color, length, diameter, and shape of objects, shape of geometric puzzle pieces, sound, etc. The classroom is set up to allow freedom of movement and provides a rich environment for the children to explore. Our teacher-child ratios help to ensure the best experiences for your child. The toddler program will introduce your child to a world of beauty, peace, and the joys of learning.

### **PRIMARY PROGRAM**

This unique three year program is designed to take advantage of the sensitive period when children can absorb information from an enriched environment. At this level the children begin to gain the skills of concentration, coordination, and develop working habits that will help them achieve in the later grades. They begin to learn how to manage their time and gain a sense of personal responsibility for what they do and accomplish. Through the use of concrete materials, abstract concepts in areas such as math or reading, begin to sink in through the hands-on work they do in these areas.

The advantage here is that the child will learn without the stumbling blocks of boredom and discouragement. Their hands-on exploration and discovery develop an enthusiasm for learning, which is key for future academic success.



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Along with developing their own self-awareness and independence, the children also gain a sense of social awareness. The multi-age group setting allows the younger ones a graded series of models for imitation, and for the older ones, an opportunity to reinforce their own knowledge.

### **Montessori Kindergarten Experience**

Kindergarten is an important year for your child. If you are trying to decide whether your child should continue in the Montessori program or enroll in a “traditional” school, we would like you to consider the following points before finalizing your decision.

1. A Montessori program is essentially a 3-year program. Kindergarten is the year where all the pieces fall into place. The concepts and skills your child has learned by working in the Montessori environment will take on complete meaning.
2. Concrete materials are used for teaching the lessons so that a child can more easily understand and absorb the meaning of the concepts being presented. A child is able to observe, explore and draw conclusions from these concrete materials. The sensorial classroom exercises assure the grasp of new concepts and mastery of a skill before moving on to more abstract work.
3. In the Montessori program, a healthy self-concept is fostered by mastery of each skill before progressing to the next level. A child develops self-confidence because he learns to think and do things for himself. He builds self-esteem since he now becomes the older, respected child in the community with many friends. The kindergartener has a sense of purpose and feels good about his contributions and accomplishments.
4. Success is what your child will experience daily in a Montessori program. The teacher works individually with your child to ensure immediate feedback. Subsequent lessons are planned according to individual needs, abilities and development. That way, no child is bored while peers catch up and no child feels their own rate of progress is unacceptable.

### **Modern Technology**

We live in a high paced, competitive world where the knowledge of computers is imperative. However, we believe a strong foundation of understanding others and ourselves should be established first. Therefore, you will not find computers in our classes but rather lessons that build fine and gross motor skills and lessons that develop cognitive (thinking) and kinesthetic (touch) aspects

We only watch age appropriate DVDs if we find a short video pertaining to a theme we are studying. Watching TV does not allow for the development of concentration, how to problem solving or growth of relationships. There is nothing wrong with watching TV, but just like many things in life, having balance is important.

## **INTERACTIONS WITHIN THE SCHOOL**

### **OBSERVATIONS AND OPEN DOOR POLICY**

We welcome and encourage parents to visit our classrooms at any time. Parents of new children are asked to wait six weeks before spending time in the class to allow their child time to adapt but you are more than welcome to watch from places your child may not notice you.

When visiting please inform your child that you will be coming to class and that you are coming to see them work. The first few visits are best at the end of the day so your child can leave with you. The older children understand better, when you visit in the morning then leave, than the younger children. We appreciate observers who attempt to minimize their impact on the classroom. Please enter the class quietly and stay low (sitting on the floor or in a chair). Enjoy your visit!

### **COMMUNICATING CONCERNS**

Concerns or questions about your child's behavior or activities should be communicated to your child's Lead Teacher. Please write a brief note explaining your questions or concern with a number the teacher can reach you at and place it in the box at the front desk. The teacher will contact you by the end of the day.

Any other questions or concerns may be directed to the Director.

### **PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES**

As part of our commitment to parent-teacher communication we hold parent-teacher conferences three times a year. Our first conference occurs before school begins. For new families this is an opportunity to meet your child's teacher one on one and share information about your child and family. For returning families this is an opportunity to bring your teacher up to date on any changes in your family or child. We will schedule conferences again in November and May; you will receive written reports at this time and your child's teacher will share information regarding your child's individual learning experiences and progress. You will receive a final progress report at the end of the school year.

You may request additional conferences at any time throughout the year; just contact your child's teacher to schedule a meeting.

### **PARENT CONTRIBUTIONS AND PARTICIPATION**

We know that the child's success is dependent on a successful partnership between home and school. In order to maintain a calm classroom atmosphere we ask that you follow the "Parent Ground Rules" posted in each classroom. Please silence your cell phone before entering the classroom and if it is necessary to take a call, please quietly leave the room.

Parental visits are important to your child. If you have knowledge of a specific educational topic or materials you would like to share with the students, please schedule a time with the teacher for a class presentation

### **ADULT AND STUDENT INTERACTIONS**

Everyone has a different way of disciplining children and although there are many ways that are healthy and positive, you and the families have entrusted us to discipline the children. When a child has done something

that needs the attention of an adult; we ask that no adult that is not employed by Smaller Scholars Montessori Academy speak to the child unless they are related to the child. We also ask that all adults speak respectfully to the children—all children.

### **CELEBRATIONS**

Birthdays are very special and the children love to celebrate them together. You are welcome to join us for this celebration of your child's life thus far. If you are unable to join us, there is a form for you to fill out telling us one or two things about your child for each year of his life so far.\* If your child would like to bring a treat on his/her birthday, we ask that you bring fruit. **Traditional birthday cakes or cupcakes with frosting are not allowed.** Party favors are prohibited, as they tend to cause disputes and hurt feelings since the children aren't allowed to play with them in class. An alternative might be a gift for the classroom from your child such as a book. This is something the entire class will enjoy using throughout the school year.

Halloween is not celebrated in the classroom due to the logistics of helping so many children with costumes and how costumes may scare children and even change their behavior. During this time of year we do not talk about ghosts, witches or any other unrealistic characters. Instead, we study real things associated with the fall and/or harvest such as pumpkins, bats, spiders, etc.

We do not celebrate religious holidays at school. We do educate children on the customs of other families and cultures. This knowledge creates understanding and mutual respect and tolerance.

\*Primary environment **only**.

Comment [21]:

## CARE OF THE CHILD

### OUTDOOR POLICY

We are fortunate for our mild winters and beautiful sunny days. Because of those beautiful sunny days we ask that all children bring a water bottle that they may have access to at all times in the classroom. We will spend time outside every day unless we are under a heat advisory. If your child is well enough to be in the program, he/she is well enough to play outdoors. The fresh air and movement are things that each child needs daily for general well-being and healthy development. You can help your child enjoy this time outdoors by being sure that he/she is dressed for the existing weather conditions. This includes applying sunscreen before school once it warms up. Due to state regulations, we are unable to apply sunscreen to the children nor can it be accessible to them to apply themselves.

### HEALTH AND SAFETY

Smaller Scholars Montessori Academy believes in teaching healthy living. We encourage our students to make safe and healthy decisions. Not only is this concept a part of our program but is also modeled daily by our staff.

### Infection Control/Sick Child Policy

When your child displays any of the following symptoms, they must stay home or will be required to be picked up from school:

- Fever of 100 degrees or higher.
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Strep Throat
- Undiagnosed Rash
- Red Eyes with Discharge
- Persistent cough and/or Green or Yellow Discharge
- Skin that is open due to infection or rash
- Evidence of Lice or Nits
- Infectious diseases

If your child develops any of these symptoms at school, you will be contacted and asked to pick up your child immediately. If you cannot be reached within 15 minutes, we will begin calling your emergency contacts. Once contact has been made, your child will need to be picked up within 30 minutes.

Your **child may return** to school when he or she is **symptom free for at least 24 hours** and/or has been on **antibiotics for the appropriate time as determined by his/her doctor in a written note**. **If diarrhea is due to prescribed medication, the school will need a doctor release before returning.**

**You may not send your child to school if they have had over the counter medicine to reduce fever. This only masks the fever – they are still contagious.**



If your child has been sent home due to evidence of lice or nits, **he/she may only return to school when they are completely lice and nit free as determined by the school.**

A doctor's note is required if your child returns to school sooner than the 24 hours. Upon your child's arrival, the Director or teacher will conduct a health check to ensure your child is symptom free. Returning to school is still under the discretion of the Director.

**It is imperative that you keep your phone numbers and emergency contact information up to date.** If your child becomes severely ill or injured while at school it is crucial that we have current phone numbers.

### **Medication**

Medication can affect your child's behavior and classroom learning experiences. Please send medication only when absolutely necessary.

- Medication needs to be in the original prescription container, with the child's name, the prescription number, the original label, the date and the correct dosage printed on it
- Any over-the-counter medication can only be administered with a written note from a doctor explaining the need for the medication and the dosage(s).
- For staff to administer medication a parent must complete an authorization form, which will be kept with the medication. Parents of students who require prescribed medication on an ongoing basis should complete a new Medication Form each time they refill the prescription.

### **Medical Emergencies**

The staff, with the help of local paramedics and physicians, will handle all emergencies. 911 will be called for any life-threatening or serious medical emergency. All efforts will be made to contact parents or authorized contacts immediately. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure enrollment records are current with correct phone numbers and emergency contact information

### **Accident Report**

In the event an accident occurs at school, a written report will be sent home with your child. This accident report will be specific as to what occurred and what actions were taken. The report will be completed and signed by the staff member involved and management personnel. A copy will be placed in the child's file and a copy will be given to you, the parent.

**Permission to Perform Minor Medical Treatment:** In the event of an emergency you hereby give the School and its employees and agents, permission to perform minor medical treatments on your child while awaiting medical help, and you hereby waive and release the School and its employees, agents, owners, members, successors and assignees from any liability in connection with any claims arising from such treatment.

### **Medical Requirements**

The Arizona Dept. of Health Emergency, Information and Immunization Record Card is required to be kept in each child's file. It is the parent's responsibility to update records in accordance with Arizona law. Children who do not have up-to-date required health information on file will be denied enrollment.

### **Smoke and Drug Free Campus**

Smoking and Drug use is strictly prohibited on our campus.



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**Pesticides**

We shall post notices of pesticide application at least 48 hours in advance. We will make written pesticide information available to a parent, upon parent's request.

## TOILET TRAINING

The independence of a “potty-trained” child is a prerequisite for the Primary (3-6) class. **Independence means that the child must have the awareness to use the bathroom without reminders, be able to manage clothing without help and have the ability to wipe or clean themselves appropriately in order to maintain clean hygiene.** If your child has a bathroom accident, we will place the wet clothes in a plastic bag in your child’s cubby to be taken home.

In the Toddler rooms we never force training. Teachers work closely with parents who are committed to move their child from diapers to underwear. When a child shows interest and readiness, we are happy to assist and encourage him to be fully independent in this way. Children are invited and encouraged to use our special size toilets. We do not use pull-ups once training has started.

## NAP AND REST POLICY

A rest period is vital for the physical well-being of active children. The school supplies a mat for your child’s comfort.

1. All children in the program up to 4 years of age participate in a time of rest or sleeping in the early afternoon. Each child will have a mat and will be expected to remain quietly on it during rest time. Restful music is played during this time. It is our belief that if a child falls asleep, his body requires that rest.
2. Children 4 years of age and older can also participate in nap and rest time if it is requested by their parents and/or if the teacher determines the child is tired and in need of some quiet time.
3. Each child must bring a crib sheet for nap time clearly labelled with their name. Each Friday, this should be taken home and washed. Children in the Infant and Toddler rooms may bring a special blanket or small item from home to help them fall asleep. This item must be able to fit into their school canvas tote. For the infants, the blanket must be lightweight and not bulky.

## MEALS/SNACKS

Children who arrive early to school may bring a breakfast. Children must finish breakfast before 8:15a.m., so please bring breakfast no later than 8:00 a.m.

Children must bring their own lunches. Families are responsible for providing foods of nutritional value and meeting the daily food needs of their children. **Please do not send milk or juice for lunch; we are a water only school.** In order to avoid the energy highs and crashes associated with food of high sugar content, we ask that you not put any sweets in your child’s lunch (e.g., cookies, fruit rollups, cakes, etc.). If sugar or high fructose corn syrup is listed as one of the first 3 ingredients, please do not include it in your child’s lunch. If there is a sweet in your child’s lunch we will ask your child to leave it in his/her lunch.

Because we teach about how to take care of the earth by recycling and reusing we prefer the children bring non-disposable utensils. Please include ice packs for food that needs to be chilled. Lunches brought from home are not shared with other children. **Children are encouraged but not forced to eat.**

A snack is served during the morning. For those children enrolled in the extended day program; parents are to provide an afternoon snack for their child. A schedule with the snack items and assigned days will be posted outside of the classroom. If your child has significant food allergies that would prevent them from safely partaking of the classroom snack **YOU MUST** provide the snacks for your child each day.

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### **NUT ALLERGY POLICY**

Food allergies can be life threatening, especially when foods contain nuts, peanuts etc. We are finding that some children can have life threatening allergic reactions from an accidental casual contact or simply smelling these products. The problem, however, is that it is not possible to predict the potential severity of a reaction ahead of time, or even at the start of the reaction. Therefore, each episode must be approached as potentially life-threatening.

Thus, we have implemented a **NO NUTS POLICY**. **Items with any kind of nut listed in the ingredients will not be allowed; it will be sent back home with a note.** Items that say they are processed in a facility that also processes nuts will be allowed

### **PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

The School will do its best to maintain personal belongings; however, the School is not responsible for loss or damage to clothes and/or personal belongings.

1. Children should always have **1-3 complete changes of labeled clothing** placed in a gallon Ziploc bag at the school. These replacement clothes need not be a uniform. The child's soiled clothing will be put in the plastic bag to take home. We will call the parents of children who soil their clothing at school without replacement items and ask that those parents bring clean clothing for their children.
2. Parents must label all items of clothing and bedding in order for staff to locate lost items. Check for missing items in the Lost & Found. Notify the office about misplaced items, so that we can help you locate them. Items, which have not been claimed after 1 month, will be given to Goodwill.
3. Children are not allowed to bring toys, stuffed pets or other personal belongings to school. They tend to be a distraction to your child and other children and stand the chance of being lost or broken. The school will not accept responsibility for any of these items that may get lost. For Show and Tell, the children may bring something special. Check with your child's teacher for details and suggestions. Children may bring a book to school for the teacher to read to the class, but please make sure his or her name is on it.

## **BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE AND INNER DISCIPLINE**

Smaller Scholars staff guides children into developing safe and appropriate ways of interacting with others and with their environment. One of our goals is to help children develop tools to problem solve. Young children learn by experimenting, testing limits and experiencing the consequences of their behavior. In the process of setting and enforcing limits, our teachers assist the children in developing self-control and respect for the rights and property of others. Children learn how to get along in a group while balancing the need for individual rights and self-expression.

Our staff is trained to help your child by word and example, to realize that the following actions are not appropriate behavior:

- Hitting, biting or harming other children or adults
- Teasing, name calling or making rude remarks
- Leaving the class/school without accompaniment by a staff person or a parent
- Showing disrespect for adults, students, the school environment, materials and equipment

### **Redirecting**

To create safe and positive social interactions young children often need to be redirected because of their curiosity or need for exploration. So that negative words such as “no”, “don’t” and “stop” are not overused we reserve them for serious situations. When safety is not a factor, we redirect young children with an interest they have to model positive self-control.

### **Separation**

Occasionally, children may be invited to work independently for a short time in order to regain self-control. In these cases, the child has an open invitation from the teacher to return to the area when he feels ready. Any separation from an area will always be within sight and hearing of the staff, and the length of time will be related to the child’s age and maturity. If a child returns to the area and is still unable to control themselves they will be separated again. At that time the teacher will determine when they can return to the area/activity.

### **Action vs. “Sorry”**

We teach the children to make amends or rectify their mistakes instead of “saying sorry.” “Sorry” quickly becomes a meaningless word unless it is put into action. If a child hurts another child, accidentally or out of anger and/or frustration, we will ask the child to see if the other child is okay and what, if anything, they can do to make it better. We then assist/direct them in following through upon the other child’s request. The children learn that actions cannot always be undone and/or fixed, teaching them through experience to think before they act.

### **Choices**

Choices play a big part in our environment. This empowers the child in a positive manner. Children want to be a part of the class and/or family. Letting them be a part of making choices, helps build their self-esteem. Giving choices can eliminate many tantrums and power struggles.

### **Natural Consequences and Consequences**

For older children natural consequences and consequences can be a great discipline tool to teach children how to make safe and healthy choices. A natural consequence occurs when we don’t intervene (when safety is not a factor) and allow the child to face the consequence that will result directly from the behavior. Being consistent with rules and discipline helps children learn to accept the consequences of their words, actions, and decisions. We often combine choices and consequences together to help them understand the possible end result for behaviors. “When you are loud, you will need to leave the area”. They are beginning to understand they are responsible for their actions.



**Inner Discipline:** The development of inner discipline in a child is always the goal at our Montessori school. Self-discipline is fostered in many ways. The classroom environment is organized in an orderly, logical manner. Children choose work, which they are capable of doing and are free to use it for as long as they wish without interference from others. This approach alleviates many problems of discipline, which might be present in another kind of environment. In addition, the mixed age group allows the younger children to emulate the older children's more mature behavior.

#### **Persistent Behavioral Issues**

Children need our guidance in every aspect of life. If your child is having behavioral issues, we will do our best to guide you and your child through that time. However, the well-being of the children come first and sometimes that means we have to look at the whole class rather than just one individual. When a child has a persistent behavioral issue, a meeting will be set up between the parents and Teachers/Director. Parents are required to attend the requested meeting(s). If the child's behavioral issues continue further, plans will be made in which parents are required to follow through with weekly meetings or outside evaluations. If the requirements and/or needs are not met or behavior persists, we will discuss other alternatives that might be better suited for the child.

#### **Abuse and Neglect**

All childcare personnel are mandated by law to report their suspicions of child abuse, neglect, or abandonment to the Arizona Child Abuse Hotline. If you have concerns that a child might be in an abusive or neglectful situation, or has been abandoned please call 1-877-SOS-CHILD or 1-877-767-2445.

#### **Incident Reports**

In the event an incident of any significance occurs at school (social or medical) a written report will be sent home with your child. This incident report will be specific as to what occurred and what actions were taken. The incident report will be completed and signed by the staff member involved and management personnel. A copy will be placed in the child's file and a copy will be given to you, the parent.

#### **Biting**

Biting can be a frustrating problem among young children. All school staff is trained on preventative strategies for this issue. Biting incidents will be communicated to the parents of both children involved, in an attempt to understand and prevent this behavior. In order to ensure the safety of all children, if attempts fail to stop the biting, we reserve the right to remove the biting child from our program. If a child bites more than three times in one day, we will call the parent to remove the child from the program for the remainder of the day.



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## SCHOOL PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

### ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

The school is open from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday twelve months of the year.

1. Each student is required to submit the following forms to the school office **prior to admission/entry** to the school:
  - Program and Rate Schedule Signature Page
  - Registration Form
  - AZ Dept. of Health Emergency, Information and Immunization Record Card
  - Current Immunization Record
  - Signature Page
  - Signed Photo Release Agreement
  - Family Profile

A visitation period of 45 minutes – 1 hour in the classroom may be scheduled to familiarize your child with the class and the staff. Parents may stay for the first 10 minutes. In addition, parents must attend an orientation meeting to go over school policies and pay applicable fees.

2. A **non-refundable registration fee** of \$200.00 per child is due upon registration and annually thereafter. Families enrolling more than one child will pay \$150.00 for each child after the first child.
3. Parents who withdraw their child from school for any reason and later decide to re-enroll, will be considered a new enrollment and will be expected to pay all applicable fees and deposits.
4. **Kindergarten Enrollment.** All children who enter our Montessori kindergarten program must turn 5 years of age by **September 1<sup>st</sup>**. Those students who turn 5 years after this cutoff date will not be eligible to enroll in this class.
5. Written notification of policy changes will be given to each family for review and signatures.
6. New students entering the school are accepted on a four-week trial basis.

### SUMMER PROGRAM (JUNE and JULY)

In addition to the Montessori curriculum, enriching learning experiences highlight our summer program activities. Visitors are also scheduled to perform each month, e.g. theatrical groups, marionette shows, magic shows, etc.

A summer activity fee of \$35.00, in addition to tuition, is charged to cover the costs of the visitors and enrichment activities. Summer classes are scheduled on a weekly basis. **Tuition must be paid on the first of the month for the weeks your child will be attending that month.** In order to plan summer activities and proper staffing, summer registration forms must be turned in by May 1<sup>st</sup>.



**TUITION**

Tuition for all students is due and payable the **first** of each month. Families enrolling more than one child will receive a 10 percent (10%) discount for each child after the first. The discount is applied to the lowest tuition. **No refunds or tuition adjustments will be applied for illnesses, vacation, school holidays, school breaks, summer months or other reasons.** This is because staffing and operational expenses are based on total enrollment. These costs are not reduced when a child is absent.

Tuition payments are calculated on an annual basis. Therefore, full monthly tuition is due, regardless of your child’s program, during the months when holidays, breaks, in-service days or summer vacations occur. All children are considered enrolled for **12 months** and full tuition is due for each month, including summer months unless **we have a written notice of withdrawal** (see section on withdrawal below).

PROGRAM	CLASS	HOURS	MONTHLY TUITION	
			Check	Credit Card 2.5%
Infants (6 Weeks – 12 Mos.)	All Day	6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.	\$1255	\$1287.18
Toddler I (12 Mos. to 18 Mos.)	All Day	6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.	\$1255	\$1287.18
Toddler II (18 Mos. To 3 Years)	Half Day*	8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.	\$ 792	\$ 812.31
	Full Day	8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.	\$ 944	\$ 968.21
	Extended Day	6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.	\$1155	\$1184.62
Primary (3 to 6 years)	Half Day*	8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.	\$ 776	\$ 795.90
	Full Day	8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.	\$ 893	\$ 915.90
	Extended Day	6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.	\$ 1024	\$1071.79

**Registration/Re-enrollment: NON-REFUNDABLE \$200** registration fee is due each **February** with re-enrollment in order to maintain a place for your child for the following school year. For new students, the fee is due when the application is submitted to secure a place.

**Non-Refundable Kindergarten Supplies & Materials Fee \$125** - Payable with August Tuition or upon enrollment



1. Late Payment Penalties. Tuition for all students is due and payable the first of each month. Any tuition not paid by the **FIFTH** business day of the month will be assessed a late penalty of **\$30.00** for the first day and **\$5.00** for each additional school day that your tuition remains unpaid. Persistent failure to pay on time may result in your child’s enrollment being terminated. You hereby agree that if the School has to take collection action to collect unpaid fees you will be responsible for the outstanding fees and the cost of collection.
2. Delinquencies. If tuition is not received by the 8<sup>th</sup> business day of the month or your child is absent without payment, your child may be automatically dropped from enrollment. This also pertains to annual Registration fees, supply fees and all other fees. Year-end statements are considered a complimentary service and will only be issued to current “zero” balance accounts.



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3. Late pick-up charges. Any child not picked up at closing time will be assessed a late fee of **\$1.00 per minute.** A statement will be sent out and payment should be to the office at the end of the week. This policy is strictly enforced. We are not licensed after 6:00 p.m.
  4. Returned checks. Returned checks are referred to a third party collection agency. Returned checks will be charged a \$25 fee payable to the third party agency. Any parent who has had two NSF checks will be required to pay by credit/debit card or money order.
  5. Statements. Monthly tuition statements/reminders will not be sent out. You can pay in person at the school, online at our website or set up automatic monthly payments through your bank's online bill pay service.
  6. Lost Payments. The School will not be responsible for any payment lost, stolen or mislaid before delivery to the school. All payments of any kind should be placed in the secured payment box.
  7. Refund Policy. Refunds will be issued if the parent has complied with the withdrawal policy and an overpayment of tuition has been made on the account. There are no refunds on registration, activity or supply fees. No refunds are provided other than described under this policy.

## **WITHDRAWAL**

A **30 day written notice of withdrawal is required. Full tuition is due for the last month regardless of how many days your child attends.** The final month's tuition payment must be made via credit/debit card or money order. Withdrawal forms are available in the school office.

## **TERMINATION OF CARE POLICY**

**Termination of Care by the School:** The program reserves the right to dismiss any child from care for the following (but not limited to) reasons:

- Failure of parents to adhere to policies.
- Behavior by child or a parent that is a disruption or is offensive to the program.

Termination of care from the school, by the school, may be effective immediately or could be issued with notice; the policy is dependent on each individual situation. **If enrollment is terminated as a result of the occurrence of any of these events, any prepaid tuition shall be forfeited.**

## **ARRIVAL AND PICK-UP PROCEDURES**

According to Arizona law, all children must be signed-in and signed-out daily. This helps determine the actual days and hours the school has provided services. At our front entrance, we have provided a computer generated tracker. Parents will be given a code to clock their children in and out which must be entered daily by the adult bringing and taking the child(ren) from school. **\*If a parent is not allowed to pick up a child, the school requires a copy of the Child Custody Agreement and/or restraining order to be on file in the office.\***

### **Arrival**

All children must be brought into school by their parents and left with the supervising teachers. **School begins at 8:30 a.m. and we ask that all children be in class at that time. Children may be dropped off between 8:15 and 8:30 a.m.** Introductory lessons may be given during line activities, which are an essential part of the school routine. This is also an important "adjustment" time for your child. Please **do not enter** the classroom and interrupt the ongoing Montessori activities **AFTER 8:30 a.m.** or after class has begun. A teacher, assistant or administrator will help your child put his/her belongings away, if necessary. We ask that you honor the children's work and time in class by arriving by 8:30.

### **Separation**

Sometimes children and parents have difficulty separating when arriving at school. We find that it is most helpful when the parent leaves the child with a reassuring staff member and calmly, but promptly, exits. Generally, the child feels more comfortable within 5 minutes. We certainly invite you to call the school later to check on your child.

### **Release of a Child**

Children must be picked up by a parent, legal guardian or specified adult. Children must be picked up from the classroom.

- No child will be released to any unauthorized person.
- The person picking up your child must be at least 18 years of age and listed on your child's authorized pick-up list.
- We must know, in writing, if there will be a change in who is picking up your child. All unidentified persons who are picking up your child from our school will be asked to show a photo ID.



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- In case of an emergency and you cannot write someone's name, please call the office at 480-630-2816 and speak to the Director or Assistant Director.
  - Smaller Scholars Montessori staff will not release a child to anyone who is suspected of intoxication or impairment. Another contact on your list will be called. If the situation escalates the police will be called to help in the matter.

The parent or authorized adult who brings or picks up a child is liable for that child's safety and well-being until the child is turned over to a staff member and once the staff member is notified that the adult is here for the child. Please keep close control of your children when entering or leaving the school and in the building. The children may not enter or depart the school building without parental supervision.

#### **Closing Hour – 6:00 p.m.**

Smaller Scholars Montessori Academy closes at 6:00 p.m. All parents must either pick up their child by 6:00 p.m. or make arrangements for someone else to pick up their child. The school will contact those persons who are listed on the Emergency Card & authorized to pick up your child(ren) if you cannot be reached by 6:00 p.m. **If no one can be reached, Child Protective Services may be called to pick up your child.**

#### **UNIFORMS**

Smaller Scholars requires the children to wear the carefully selected uniform. We believe it gives them a sense of pride and a feeling of belonging to a group. A prepared environment should be free of hindering distractions and this includes the dress of the adults as well as the students. The Montessori Method ensures that children continue to develop as individuals through their own personality and abilities.

Uniforms can be ordered anytime during the year from the designated school vendor. The current brochure and sample uniforms are available at the front desk. There is also a link on the website. Smaller Scholars also has an annual "Used Uniform Sales" for parents to sell and buy gently used uniforms.

If your child is not in proper uniform you will be notified to bring their uniform or to pick your child up for the rest of the day.

1. Children in all of the programs except for infants must wear school uniforms Monday through Thursday during the school year. Each Friday and on designated celebration days your child may select what he/she wishes to wear. During the Summer Program in June and July uniforms are not required.
2. For the **safety** of your child, please dress your child in **closed shoes** daily. Rubber soles prevent children from slipping and falling.

#### **FIELD TRIPS**

Smaller Scholars Montessori Academy does not take field trips off campus. Instead, we invite community members into the school to share their information. In the event that those presentations are conducted outside of your child's classroom or the playground, they will be conducted in our Extended Care/Multi-Purpose Room and a Field Trip Permission slip will be required. Parents will sign a Field Trip Permission slip at the beginning of the year allowing their child(ren) to participate in general activities/extended care in the Multi-Purpose Room.

Children who arrive before 8:15 sign into the Extended Day room. At 8:15 the Extended Care Teacher will line up the children and conduct a head count. She will then walk the line of children around the building,



starting with the toddler rooms, and sign the children into their classrooms. She will not move to the next room until the classroom teacher has acknowledged and recorded the children's presence. After the school day is finished teachers will line up students not yet picked up by 3:40 and do a head count. The teacher will then walk the children to the Extended Day room and sign them into the Extended Day program. The classroom teacher will not leave the children until the Extended Care Teacher has acknowledged and recorded their presence.

#### CLASSROOM INFORMATION

Each classroom has a message board for parent notices. Please check these areas as well as your child's file folder for information. School-wide notices usually go out on Fridays. If needed, please leave a voicemail message for your child's Montessori teacher. The call will be returned within 24 hours.

Classrooms may have class pets, such as guinea pigs, hamsters, fish, etc. Under the guidance of the teachers, children may take part in the care of the animals and may touch some animals. The parent may notify the office if they prefer that their child not have contact with the pets. The student's personal pets cannot be brought into the classroom.

#### CLASSROOM MATERIALS

There are many interesting items in a Montessori classroom. It is natural for these small objects to sometimes be discovered in a pocket or show up at home. We ask that you **please** return them to school when they are found. Materials are often difficult to replace and any incomplete classwork is removed from the shelf. Gently remind your child that the items belong at school so that all children may use them.

#### PROFESSIONAL DAYS

The school provides staff training twice annually. During these days the school will be closed. Dates are noted on the annual School calendar.

#### FALL/WINTER/SPRING BREAKS AND IN-SERVICE DAYS

**Only extended day** students may attend school during Fall/Winter/Spring breaks and In-service days when half/full day students are not in attendance. Montessori classes will not be in session those days, but special activities will be planned. Please refer to the school calendar.

#### INSURANCE

Smaller Scholars carries general liability insurance as required by Arizona Statute R9-5-308. The insurance policy is kept in the Director's office and is available for review upon request.

**Liability Release and Indemnification:** The School maintains an insurance policy in connection with its liability for any injury, loss or damage that may occur to your child, your child's property or your property as a result of fire, theft, storm or other causes. Acting on behalf of yourself and your child, you hereby waive and agree to release any claims that you, your child, or you and your child's legal representatives and heirs may have against the School or any employee, agent, owner or member of the School, or any successor or assign of the School, arising from or related to any injury, loss or damage to the extent, (a) that such injury, loss or damage is not covered by the insurance policy maintained by the School, or (b) that the monetary amount of such injury, loss or damage exceeds any amount payable under such insurance policy. You also agree to be responsible for and to indemnify and hold harmless the School, any employee, agent, owner or member of the School, and any successor and assignee of the School from and against, any and all claims, liabilities, damages, judgments and costs (including attorney's fees and court costs) that may be brought against or incurred by the School, any employee, agent, owner or member of the School or any successor or assignee of the School, arising from or related to any act or omission on the part of you or your child. The School is also not responsible for personal items lost, stolen or broken while in our care.



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#### LICENSING

Smaller Scholars Montessori Academy is fully licensed by the Arizona Dept. of Health Services Division of Childcare Licensing and inspected on an annual basis to ensure it is in compliance with all state regulations. The current license is on display in the front office. Parents may review a copy of the school's most recent Licensing inspection report upon request. The Dept. of Health Services can be reached at:

Dept. of Health Services  
Division of Licensing Services  
Bureau of Child Care Licensing  
150 N. 18<sup>th</sup> Ave., 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Phoenix, AZ 85007  
(602) 364-2539

#### NON-DISCRIMINATION

We comply with the American's with Disabilities Act and other applicable regulations pertaining to providing services to individuals with special needs. We do not discriminate in our acceptance of clients based on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, disability, religion or gender.

#### EXTRACURRICULAR CLASSES

Extracurricular classes may be available after school from outside companies and will require an additional fee. Please contact the office for further information if you are interested.



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## School Specific Program Information

School Address: Smaller Scholars Montessori Academy, 1675 W. Guadalupe, Gilbert, AZ 85233  
Phone: 480-630-2816  
School Director: Darling Hall  
Website: [www.smallerscholars.com](http://www.smallerscholars.com)  
E-mail: [director.gilbert@smallerscholars.com](mailto:director.gilbert@smallerscholars.com)

**Program:** Smaller Scholars Montessori Academy offers a year round full day Montessori program for children ranging in age from 6 weeks through private kindergarten.

**Hours: 6:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. – Monday thru Friday.** Our full day is from 8:30a.m.—3:30p.m. and our half day is from 8:30a.m. –11:30a.m. The Extended Day program covers 630a.m.-8:30 and 3:30—6:00 for an additional fee. Children may not be dropped off before 6 :30 a.m. and must be picked up by 6:00 p.m.. We do charge a late fee after 6:00 p.m.

**Enrollment of Children:** Upon enrolling your child you will be required to pay a registration fee and complete a registration packet in its entirety. The registration material includes enrollment and emergency information. All required personal information is kept confidential. Please be sure and update all emergency data as needed.

**Registration:** A \$200 **non-refundable** registration fee is due upon enrollment and annually thereafter. Families enrolling more than one child will pay \$150.00 for each child after the first child.

**Monthly Tuition/Program Fees:** Please see tuition rate sheet for fee and payment schedule.

**Non-Refundable Kindergarten Supplies & Materials Fee \$125** - Payable with August Tuition or upon enrollment

**Additional Fees:** Additional extra-curricular activities may be offered at an additional cost. See your school Director for details.

**Transportation:** We do not offer transportation.

**Field Trips:** Smaller Scholars Montessori Academy does not take field trips off campus. Instead, we invite community members into the school to share their information. In the event that those presentations are conducted outside of your child's classroom or the playground, they will be conducted in our Extended Care/Multi-Purpose Room and a Field Trip Permission slip will be required. Parents will sign a Field Trip Permission slip at the beginning of the year allowing their child(ren) to participate in general activities/extended care in the Multi-Purpose Room.

**Licensing Information:** Smaller Scholars Montessori Academy is fully licensed by the Arizona Dept. of Health Services Division of Childcare Licensing and inspected on an annual basis to ensure it is in compliance with all state regulations. The current license is on display in the front office. Parents may review a copy of the school's most recent Licensing inspection report upon request. The Dept. of Health Services can be reached at:

Dept. of Health Services  
Division of Licensing Services  
Bureau of Child Care Licensing  
150 N. 18th Ave., 4th Floor  
Phoenix, AZ 85007  
(602) 364-2539