

DISCOVERY GARDENS

Early Childhood Center



2024-2025 Parent Handbook



Philosophy & Goals

Welcome to Discovery Gardens. Our preschool program is designed to provide opportunities for each child to build self-esteem, self-confidence and positive relationships. Our goal is to provide all of the children in our care with a clean, safe, comfortable and loving environment where they can play and learn. Our approach to teaching can be described as the sharing of knowledge between child and adult, in a hands-on, child directed atmosphere.

Enrollment Requirements/ Fees

Children must be at least 2.10 years old to be eligible for our preschool program. **All preschool age children must be potty trained.** The only exception will be for children with an IEP. All registration materials in the parent packet must be completed and returned prior to the start date.

The following records must be submitted along with the packet:

- An original birth certificate
- Current immunization records
- Proof of address: driver's license, lease/mortgage agreement, utility bill, bank/credit card statement

A \$150.00 non-refundable annual registration & activities fee is required.

If your child is picked up after closing time, an additional fee of \$10.00 for the first five minutes and \$1.00 for every minute thereafter will be charged. Consistently late pickups may result in termination of a student's enrollment at Discovery Gardens.

****A Toddler Program** is available at our Washington Campus. Children must be 24 months of age to participate in the program. Toddlers do not need to be potty trained.**

Tuition

Tuition is paid monthly. **Monthly payments are due by the 15th of each month.**

Tuition fees are payable by cash, check, Visa, MasterCard or money order.

Discovery Gardens does not reduce tuition due to a child's illness or vacation. Refunds of tuition will be made only if the student is officially withdrawn on or before the first day of the month. Withdrawal after that date will leave the parent/guardian liable for a full month's tuition. Consistently late tuition payments may result in immediate termination of a student's enrollment at Discovery Gardens. Families with more than one child enrolled in our center may be entitled to a 10% discount.

***If tuition is paid after the 15th of the month, a \$25 late fee will be charged.**

Attendance/Punctuality

Regular attendance is both appreciated and expected.

Please call the office to report an absence: 928.442.1283

After 10 consecutive unexcused absences, our school policy is to automatically withdraw the student.

Punctuality will promote learning. Tardiness can be very disruptive for the child, the teacher, and the other students in the class. Please be prompt.

Fees for late pick ups will apply as follows: \$10.00 for every five minutes after the child's school day ends.

Toddlers at Discovery Gardens

Toddlers are encouraged to express their individual interests through interactions with each other and through hands-on environmental experiences. Teachers and staff encourage emergent communication skills by engaging the children in conversations and helping to resolve conflicts peacefully.

Classroom teachers create learning centers with activities based on high interest themes. All classrooms are rich in literature. Independent skills are fostered throughout the day with an emphasis on daily living skills like pottyng and meals.

Please supply and label (FIRST and LAST names) the following items:

- Backpack
- Reusable water bottle
- Lunch box with nutritious foods daily (parent provided)
- Change of clothes- shirt, pants, underwear, socks & shoes
- Blanket & pillow (small) for rest time (Toddlers)

A special stuffed animal or something that will make your child feel comfortable may be used at nap time.

Preschool at Discovery Gardens

The preschool years are widely recognized as providing the foundation for lifelong learning. Children develop significantly in their physical, social, emotional and cognitive areas during preschool years. At Discovery Gardens, play is promoted as the major vehicle for learning. Children's self-expression is encouraged in our music, art, dramatic play, library, block, writing and science centers. Teachers create developmentally appropriate lesson plans. Their classrooms are rich with literacy and in numeracy, continually emphasizing preparation for upcoming school years.

Please supply and label (FIRST and LAST names) the following items:

- Backpack
- Change of clothes- shirt, pants, underwear, socks & shoes
- Reusable water bottle
- Lunch box with nutritious foods daily (parent provided)

Sample Daily Activities

The following activities are typically included in a preschool day. They may not occur in this particular order, nor will every session include all activities. Weekly lesson plans are posted in each classroom. Families will receive an email or hard copy of lesson plans each week.

- Opening time: welcome, hand washing, small group activities
- Center time: student choice - art, writing, manipulatives, blocks, dramatic play, science, sensory and library
- Circle time/Morning meeting: songs, stories, poems and fingerplays that reinforce letters, numbers, shapes, social and emotional concepts
- Small group time: differentiated instructional activities (fine motor, one to one correspondence, letter identification, counting, etc..)
- Lunch: children who attend a.m. classes bring their own, nutritious, non-refrigerated lunch
- Outside free play and/or indoor gross motor play with songs and movement
- Story time: reading and sharing stories to develop vocabulary/language and literacy skills.

Child Find Screening

Discovery Gardens offers Child Find Screenings for children ages 3-5.

Parents/guardians with concerns about their child's development may call to set up an appointment. Our preschool assesses the following:

- Vision and hearing
- Motor control/ coordination
- Social skills
- Speech & language skills
- Thinking and performing tasks

Students with Disabilities Policy

At Discovery Gardens, we strive to meet the needs of all students keeping in mind compliance with the American Disabilities Act and Department of Health Services Child Care Licensing requirements.

To ensure all children in our program are receiving proper individualized care and are safe throughout the day, we have classes available for children with disabilities during school hours: 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. We can only accommodate children with disabilities in our before and after care programs with their direct support caregiver. If families require care for a child with disabilities outside of the scheduled preschool classroom times, we can refer families to organizations that employ direct support caregivers for children.

- The Early Childhood Special Education program is for children with significant developmental delays between the ages of two years ten months to five years old. The students receive services a minimum of 360 minutes per week. Each student is provided with an Individual Education Program (IEP), which is based on the student's needs and strengths as determined by assessments, observations, home and school inventories. Students may participate in school activities with typical peers as appropriate. Each program is served by a certified Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) teacher and at least one instructional assistant.
- A Speech and Language Pathologist works with each classroom both in designing and implementing IEPs.
- Occupational and Physical therapy services are available to all students on a consult basis. Direct therapy is available to those students who qualify for it as a part of their IEP.

Dismissal/Termination from Special Education Classes

Sometimes dismissal/termination occurs before the transition to kindergarten.

Determination of dismissal from services can be based upon:

- Attainment of all current goals;
- Review of existing data;
- Further evaluation; or
- Assessment that indicates the child is functioning within expected limits in all developmental areas

Special needs children are released from the program under one of the following conditions:

- The child does not attend for 10 consecutive days without notice from the parent as to the reason for absence.
- The parent withdraws the child from the school by completing the necessary paperwork.
- The evaluation team determines that the child is no longer eligible for special education.

Educational Transitions (Child to Kindergarten, Family to School, School to School)

When children make the transition from preschool to elementary school, they must adjust to new settings and situations — including new rules and expectations, new ways of learning, new relationships with peers and adults, and new physical surroundings. When a young child transitions successfully, he or she is more likely to enjoy school, show steady growth in academic and social skills, and have families who are more actively engaged.

PUSD provides:

- Joint professional development for early education and early-grades teachers , with several goals: aligning student expectations and routines, increasing consistency of experiences for students, and understanding each other’s practices to become partners and allies
- In-person and/or virtual orientation /open house for families and children to visit the setting into which the child is transitioning
- Community Resources: workshops, webinars, handouts

Discovery Gardens’ Teachers:

- introduce students to materials, activities, concepts, and routines that they will experience in kindergarten to ease their fears and facilitate a smooth transition
- share newsletters and weekly lesson plans with families
- encourage families to participate in school events and home learning activities
- schedule parent teacher conferences

Communication

Our program was created to serve parents as well as children. Parents are encouraged to participate in their child’s education whenever possible. We encourage parents to regularly share concerns about their child with teachers and staff. Update teaching staff and director of any family issues (death, illness, travel and separation/divorce) that may cause changes in the behavior of your child. Children can be extremely sensitive to the changing environment. Your communication helps our staff know when a child needs extra patience, attention and love. Parent, teacher or director conferences and phone calls can be scheduled at any time a need arises by calling our main office.

Disciplinary Policy

Discovery Gardens seeks to promote positive behavior in children and help them learn self-control, which is the ultimate goal of discipline. We want to teach and lead our children to make better choices.

All discipline actions will be positive in nature. The method of discipline will vary with the age and action of the child. Individual teachers are given discretion in how to handle each situation as it arises. As a matter of policy, the following is a general framework for discipline.

- Separate the child from the behavior (distraction)
- Redirect the child's behavior
- Give acceptable choices
- Use positive language
- Refuse to argue on non-negotiable issues
- Look for a deeper problem

*If a behavior endangers the health or well being of the staff or classmates, the parent/guardian will be contacted for immediate student removal and a behavioral plan will be created. An incident report will be filed in the students' school records. This report may result in short or long term suspension or possible expulsion, based upon the severity and/or the degree to which the behavior is considered chronic. Appeal and due process procedures are provided in Governing Board Policy J.4. This policy is available at the Prescott Unified School District Office.

[Drop off and Pick up Policy](#)

Parents/guardians and other authorized persons must sign in and out daily.

You must sign in and out with your first and last name, no initials please.

If your child is to be picked up by someone not on the approved list, parents/guardians must call the DG office or provide a written note, text or email naming the individual who has permission to pick up the child. The adult must provide a photo I.D. at pick up time.

[Medical Emergencies and Illness](#)

Parents/guardians will be notified by phone when a child is ill or injured at school.

Parents/guardians must pick up their child immediately if the child has symptoms of a contagious disease, diarrhea, vomiting and/or an elevated temperature. Your child is required to stay home for 24 hours without medication or symptoms before he/she is allowed to return to school. It is strictly against Discovery Gardens' policy to give your child fever reducing medication to mask illness/symptoms prior to bringing him/her to school. This may result in immediate withdrawal of your family.

In the event of a serious illness or injury, at the discretion of the administration, paramedics will be called and your child will be transported to an emergency medical facility.

[Medication](#)

We prefer that parents administer all prescription and over-the-counter medications at home before and after center hours.

Should a prescription require that medication be given while your child is at school, a consent form for the administration of medications must be completed by the parent/guardian and be on file at the site. The medication must be in the original prescription container labeled by the pharmacist to include the name of the student, date, dosage, name of medication, method of administration and number of doses contained.

[Allergies](#)

Parents must provide copies of all necessary information associated with a child's allergy. This includes a doctor's note, explanation of care and treatment, medicines used, and continuity of care.

[Appropriate Dress](#)

Please send your child in comfortable clothing that can be handled by the child alone. Preschool can be active and messy, neatness is not guaranteed.

Dress your child for the weather. We spend a minimum of one hour outdoors each day. Children will go outside if it is above 32 degrees.

For safety and protection: tennis shoes, closed toe shoes, and/or flat heeled shoes are best. Shoes that can be easily put on and fastened. Avoid long laces to prevent tripping and stumbling.

Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting

We are required by law to report any suspected neglect or abuse to the local police department and Child Protective Services.

Custody Issues

The custodial parent has the responsibility to keep the teaching staff and director informed of any changes or pertinent information. Non-custodial parents will not be permitted to use the school/center for child visitation.

Transportation & Field Trips

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to transport children to and from school. District owned or approved transportation is used whenever the children go on field trips. Written permission for the parent/guardian is required for your child to participate in field trips organized by Discovery Gardens Early Childhood Center. Written permission must be received prior to departure. If you do not want your child to participate in the field trip, please arrange alternate child care for that day.

Termination of Child's Contract for Preschool and/or Extended Care

- Behavior: our center reserves the right to dismiss a child and terminate enrollment for any reason in order to preserve the program's integrity and commitment to quality child care.
- Non-payment of tuition and/or late fees: our center may dismiss a child for non-payment.
- Chronic late pick-ups: on the third late pick-up, the parent will meet with the director, who at that time may terminate the child's enrollment.

Pesticide Application Procedures

Notices will be posted no less than 48 hours prior to the pesticide application and will identify areas to be treated. Signs will be removed no less than 48 hours after pesticide is applied. All past inspections can be reviewed in the main office.

School Emergency Information: [How We Prepare for Emergencies](#)

[We have emergency supplies.](#)

Schools have emergency supplies, including first aid supplies and other basic necessities. These supplies are inspected regularly and used during drills.

[We conduct regular drills.](#)

Schools conduct regular emergency drills. Discovery Gardens Preschool conducts one fire drill a month. In addition, schools conduct at least two emergency drills a year. Each school has an Emergency Readiness Plan customized to each individual school's needs that plans for all kinds of hazards and emergency situations.

[Keep yourself informed.](#)

Keep yourself informed of school procedures by attending parent meetings, reading the student-parent handbook, and school newsletter, and checking the school website periodically. Attend emergency drills at your child's school, and make sure that your family is prepared for emergencies, too.

Emergency Response Definitions

[Evacuation](#)

An Evacuation is called when there are conditions inside the school building that are unsafe. Students and staff evacuate the building to an outside location. Students and staff assemble at predetermined locations away from the school buildings. A "fire drill" is an evacuation. Other reasons for evacuation may include utility outage, gas leak, chemical spill, hazardous material incident, and flooding.

An off-site evacuation may be necessary depending on the extent of damage caused by the incident. If this occurs, school district officials will coordinate bussing students to a safe off-campus location (ex. another school, church, or community building). Instructions to pick up students will be sent out by the district automated phone, text, or email system.

[Shelter in Place](#)

A Shelter in Place is called when students and staff need to be inside the building for safety. During Shelter in Place, students and staff are moved (or remain) in their classrooms and normal classroom activities continue until the incident concludes. Shelter in place is used to provide protection against the outdoor environment.

[Lockdown](#)

A Lockdown is called when there is an immediate threat or hazard on the school campus. Students and staff are moved (or remain) in classrooms, doors and windows are locked, and lights are shut off. Classroom activities cease until the incident concludes. School administrators and district officials work with local first responders to maximize student safety.

Lockdowns are implemented for a variety of reasons, including intruder/suspicious person, active shooter, bomb, severe weather, and police suspect loose.

[Parent-Student Reunification](#)

Parent-Student Reunification is a process where parents will be asked to pick up their students from school in formalized, controlled release. Reunification may be necessary due to weather, a power outage, hazmat, or if a crisis occurs at the school. The goal of reunification is that all students remain safe while in the school's care and that all students are reunited with their families.

School Response to Emergencies: [An Emergency at School](#)

If there is an emergency at school, school personnel have been trained and will react quickly to protect children. If the emergency is a fire, students will evacuate to their Assembly Area until authorities determine that it is safe to re-enter the buildings. Students will not return to classrooms until doing so is not a possible danger to them.

In rare instances, where more distance is needed to ensure student safety, students may be relocated to another site. Parents will be advised of all relocations through a Bright Arrow automated phone message.

If there is a hazard outside, such as a report of a person in the area with a gun, or a nearby chemical release, students will be brought inside, where the building itself will help protect them from danger. Schools will act to protect students and are prepared to shelter the students inside classrooms for hours if necessary. If students are held for a lengthy period of time, there are plans in place for emergency food, medical and restroom needs – these plans vary depending on the nature of the danger to students.

If there is an emergency at school, you will generally see one of two scenarios when you arrive at the school. You may see all of the students outside in the Assembly Area, if the building is potentially dangerous to the students, or you will see no one outside, because there is a potential hazard outside of the school, and officials are keeping the children inside, and using the building to help shield the students from harm.

[Communicating with the School During an Emergency](#)

Schools communicate regularly with parents using Bright Arrow, through which parents receive automated calls regarding school situations, including emergencies. If you are not receiving Bright Arrow messages, check with your child's school to ensure that the school has the correct number for you. It is imperative that we have phone numbers to contact you during an emergency. Make sure you update your school emergency card and contact information for each child each time the information changes. Keep your phone with you during emergencies so that you can receive updates on the emergency by Bright Arrow automated messaging service. Make sure you keep your address and phone numbers updated with the school so that you can be notified in the event of emergencies.

Schools have numerous ways to communicate with their own staff, other schools and district personnel, and outside agencies that may respond in the event of an emergency. These methods include a public address system and two-way radios, so that a school need not rely on the phone system.

Depending on the emergency, you may not be able to get close to the school and may be asked to wait in a safe area near the school. If it is hazardous for students to be released, everyone will be kept inside the school until notified by the authorities that it is safe outside. Schools will act with the safety of students in mind, and school officials will always follow the directives of the police department and the fire department.

[Family Reunification after an Emergency](#)

When it is safe to pick up your child following an emergency, you will need to follow a special process to ensure everyone's safety. The Request Gate is the station set up to identify yourself to school staff and request that your child be sent out. You must bring I.D., and you must be listed on the child's emergency card in order to check a child out. You will then report to the Reunion Gate, where your child will be brought to you. Separating the two gates keeps crowding down, and lessens anxiety for children who may become frightened by a large crowd of parents.

[State Licensing & Liability](#)

Discovery Gardens Early Childhood Center is currently licensed and regulated by;
The Arizona Department of Health Services, Office of Child Care Licensing
150 N. 18th Avenue Suite 400
Phoenix, AZ 85007
602.364.2539



Discovery Gardens Early Childhood Center and Main Office

300 East Gurley Street (located at the Washington School)
Prescott, AZ 86301
928.442.1283

Discovery Gardens: Taylor Hicks Campus

1845 Campbell Avenue
Prescott, AZ 86301
928.442.1283

Discovery Gardens: Lincoln Campus

201 Park Avenue
Prescott, AZ 86303
928.442.1283

Discovery Gardens: Abia Judd Campus

1749 Williamson Valley Road
Prescott, AZ 86305
928.442.1283