



VALLEY VIEW

Early Learning Center

**3435 E SUNRISE DRIVE
TUCSON, AZ 85718
(520) 209-7650**

FAMILY HANDBOOK

2024-2025



CATALINA FOOTHILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT



Dear Families,

Welcome to Valley View Early Learning Center (VVELC)! Founded in 1988 by a dedicated committee of district parents and teachers, our program is built on a child-centered philosophy that continues to guide us today. We continually strive to use inclusive and developmentally appropriate practices for young children as a framework for planning and assessing children's progress in all aspects of the social, cognitive, and physical foundations necessary for success in later schooling.

At VVELC, we emphasize diversity throughout our program, and our individualized, developmental approach lends itself to meeting the unique needs of children. We offer full-day and half-day programs for children 2.5 – 5 years of age, including Spanish and Mandarin Chinese Immersion programs. Our program runs from August to May and follows the Catalina Foothills School District calendar.

This Family Handbook serves as a comprehensive resource. We encourage all primary caregivers to review it thoroughly, as it complements our family orientation and helps ensure a high-quality experience for everyone at VVELC.

We invite you to engage in all aspects of the program. As your interests and schedule permit, please respond to our varied offers to become involved in the VVELC community. Your involvement enriches our program and your child's experience.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me via phone, email, or in person. We're excited to partner with you and look forward to a rewarding year ahead.

We welcome your family to the VVELC community!

On behalf of the Valley View Staff,

Jennifer Dooley, Principal
520-209-7650

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MISSION STATEMENT

Our Early Learning Center is committed to being a child-centered, developmentally appropriate program that provides for all areas of the child's development; the physical, the social, the emotional and the cognitive, through an integrated approach.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy of Valley View Early Learning Center embraces the belief that the child's personality, interests, and the environment play an equal role in shaping his or her development. We believe that children learn best through developmentally appropriate practices in an inclusive setting when they are allowed to actively interact with the environment, are given many opportunities to make choices and decisions, and develop skills through communication and play with others.

We believe that children learn best:

- By exploring concepts through hands-on activities
- Through long blocks of uninterrupted play
- From opportunities to explore both outside and inside
- When they have a caring, respectful relationship with peers and adults
- In an atmosphere that celebrates the joy of everyday life
- With exposure to activities and experiences that are culturally relevant in their daily lives

Valley View Early Learning Center's approach is based on theories and research in child development, together with years of practice. Our approach is also aligned with the guidelines set by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

We use our developmental goals as a systematic framework for focusing our program and assessment design. Our staff is well versed in a wide variety of early childhood approaches, and we choose strategies, daily routines, classroom arrangements, and daily activities that will encourage each child's development. Staff observations and documentation of individual development are used to adjust the program to better challenge individual development, as well as to conference with parents about ways we can work as a team to support each child.

ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

Children have a date of birth falling between September 1, 2019-February 1, 2022 for enrollment at Valley View Early Learning Center and **must be toilet-trained**. Children must be three years old by February 1, 2025. We do not allow children to wear pull-ups or diapers to school.

REGISTRATION

Each December, currently enrolled children and their siblings have the first opportunity to enroll in a class for the following year. Registration information, including when and how to register will be made available at the end of November. Our classrooms are mixed-age (3-, 4- and 5-year olds) and children are grouped by schedule (half day, full day). We make an effort to maintain continuity of

care when possible as this helps children to build stronger attachments to staff that encourages development in all domains.

REQUIRED PAPERWORK

Before your child can begin school, the following paperwork must be completed and turned in to the office.

- Blue Emergency Card (completed when doing the cs.cfsd16.org registration process)
- Current Immunization Records (or exemption form)
- Copy of Birth Certificate or Passport
- Medical Action Plan and FARE form if needed (prescribed medication turned into the office in original packaging with prescription label attached)
- Student Background Information Form
- Topical Product Consent Form
- ParentSquare Consent Form
- Family Handbook Acknowledgement Form
- Potty Accident Policy Form

TUITION

At VVELC, our expenses are budgeted for the entire school year at a fixed rate. Tuition, including fees for extended sessions, are paid on a monthly basis and are due on the first of each month. We do not accept cash. Payment can be made in one of the following methods:

- Check or money order made payable to **CFSD Community Schools** and mailed to the school (3435 E Sunrise Dr, 85718) or submitted to the front office.
- Credit Card (MasterCard, Visa or Discover) by logging in to your Community schools account at cs.cfsd16.org.

REFUND POLICY

It is our policy not to offer refunds during the school year. All fees and tuition are non-refundable. Tuition will not be reduced for missing scheduled days. **Refunds are not given if you withdraw your child during any part of the month.**

ADDITIONAL FEES

Extended Hours:

VVELC also offers additional hours in the morning before school from 7:00-9:00am and in the afternoon from 2:30-5:30pm. Families may sign their child up for this time by using the "View and Manage Calendars" feature in VVELC programming at cs.cfsd16.org. If you have a consistent schedule you will need your child to attend extended hours, we recommend you sign up for extended hours at least for the entire month or school year to secure enrollment. Extended sessions can be registered for on a weekly basis; however, there is a limit to the number of children in extended sessions. **Online registration must be completed by the Thursday prior to the week of attendance to ensure proper staffing.** The fee for Extended Sessions is \$7.50/hour.

Late Payment Fee:

Tuition is due the first of the month. A late settlement fee of \$25 may be assessed for all financial settlements made after the fifth day of the month. After the next ten days, an additional \$10 late fee will be assessed each class day to a maximum of \$250.

Extended CARE Drop-in and Unscheduled Attendance Fee:

Unscheduled attendance occurs when a child changes their current extended hour needs. Notification of changes should be communicated to the front office by the end of day on Thursday prior to the week of change. **Drop-in attendance is subject to the \$7.50 late schedule/payment fee plus your hours of usage if not notified by the Thursday deadline.** Please know that staffing is determined by student enrollment.

Late Pick Up from Core Class Fee:

Late pick-ups are a great inconvenience for staff. **Families who pick up children more than 5 minutes after their scheduled class dismissal time will be charged \$2 per minute.** If you know ahead of time that you will be late, please let us know. Late fees are charged to offset the cost of keeping staff late and will hopefully serve to encourage parents to come on time. Our goal is to discourage late pick-ups rather than to offer expensive late childcare. If a family continues to arrive late to pick up their child, the child's continued enrollment at VVELC will be in jeopardy.

Late Pick Up from Extended CARE Fee:

The CARE program closes at 5:30 pm. All children are expected to be picked-up by a parent or authorized guardian by 5:30 pm. **If a parent/guardian arrives after 5:30 pm, you will be charged the designated late fee of \$2 per minute.** Emergency contacts (on the blue emergency card) will be called if our staff is not notified ahead of time of a late pick-up. There will be no exceptions or warnings. If a parent/guardian is late for whatever reason (flat tire, heavy traffic, etc.) a late charge will be issued.

WITHDRAWAL

If you no longer need VVELC services for your child, please call the school office at 520-209-7650. We will remove your child from the attendance schedule and notify the classroom staff. We will also need you to complete an official District Withdrawal form. *Please note that there are no refunds for partial months of attendance.*

TERMINATION

Valley View Early Learning Center may terminate the enrollment and enforce the withdrawal of any child at any time due to delinquent payment, ill health, consistent behavior problems without requested child guidance evaluation being completed, parent dissatisfaction, and any other problems in accordance with the VVELC Family and Staff Handbooks, or as necessary and determined by the Principal of the school.

SCHOOL HOURS

Valley View Early Learning Center is open from 7:00am to 5:30pm. We offer half-day classes from 8:30am-11:30am, full day classes from 8:30am - 2:30pm and 9am-3pm in addition to morning (7 am-9 am) and afternoon (2:30 pm-5:30 pm) extended hours. The front office hours are 7:30 am to 4 pm on all school days. If you need to contact staff after office hours, please call the Extended CARE specific classroom your child attends. Specific phone numbers will be provided at the start of the school year. Please enter them into your contacts so they are easily accessible.

DROP OFF/PICK UP PROCEDURES & TRANSPORTATION

All children must be signed in with a signature upon arrival and signed out upon departure. Sign in and out logs are kept on a podium outside your child's designated classroom. Parents/guardians sign their child in and out on this log regardless of the time the child arrives or departs from school.

A child's parent/guardian must provide a list of adults to whom the child can be released. At least two additional contacts other than parents must be provided. Parents can only be excluded from picking up when a court of competent jurisdiction has limited the parental right of access to the child and a copy of the order is on file at the facility.

Punctual arrivals are crucial for your child's full participation in daily activities. The morning routine often sets the tone for the entire day, significantly impacting your child's overall experience.

Equally important is picking up your child on time. Prompt pick-ups provide young children with a sense of security and predictability. Seeing other children leave while waiting can cause anxiety for those still at school. Timely pick-ups are also essential for maintaining appropriate staff-to-child ratios and allowing our teachers to prepare for the next day.

We kindly request your cooperation in adhering to scheduled arrival and departure times to ensure a positive, consistent experience for all children and to support our staff in providing high-quality care and education.

If you arrive after class has begun, please enter quietly and discreetly, minimizing disruption to ongoing activities. Follow the established drop-off procedure. Children thrive on routine and can be sensitive to classroom interruptions, which may affect your child and their classmates' behavior and learning.

If you anticipate separation difficulties, proactively discuss strategies with your child's teacher. Prolonged parental presence may hinder your child's bonding with staff, impact classroom dynamics, and make transitions more challenging, especially at the beginning of the school year. We discourage repeated check-ins, as they can be unsettling for young children. Instead, we encourage establishing a goodbye routine, building trust in our care and fostering independence. For any concerns, please schedule a time to speak with your child's teacher outside of class hours.

Children will not be allowed to leave the school with unauthorized adults. Be sure to inform the front office staff and the classroom staff of changes in your dismissal arrangements by calling, emailing

or messaging in ParentSquare. Anyone new picking up your child will need to present an ID for verification of their name on the list of people that parents/guardians give consent to pick up their child.

All transportation to and from the program is provided by the parent/guardian or by someone designated by the parent/guardian.

Late Pick Up Procedure

If you know you are running late and picking up later than your scheduled time, please call 520-209-7650 and notify us of your anticipated time of pick-up. It is helpful for staff to know in advance so they can help your child adjust to the late departure. It also helps plan for staff coverage during the minutes the child is remaining in the program. If a child is moved to a different area of the school a note will be posted on the outside of the pick up door indicating the location of pick up. The child's belongings will be with the child at the pick up point. If a parent has not contacted the Extended CARE staff by 5:35pm, the staff will follow the protocol below:

1. Attempt to contact the parent/legal guardian.
2. If the parent/legal guardian cannot be reached, we will call the child's authorized emergency contact list. We will continue to attempt contact with the parent/legal guardian and/or authorized emergency contacts until 6:30pm.
3. If by 6:30pm, we are still not able to reach any parent/legal guardian and/or an authorized emergency contact, we will call the Arizona Department of Child Safety and/or the local sheriff's department.
 - Arizona Department of Child Safety can be reached at 1-888-767-2445
 - Local Sheriff's Department can be reached at 520-351-6311

Parents must sign out their child with the accurate time of pick-up. The accounts manager will include the late fee(s) in the next tuition billing cycle when late fee payments are expected to be paid.

If you are having consistent difficulties in picking up your child by 5:30pm, please talk to the principal or the CARE main office to help you find resources to assist in finding solutions for prompt departures. Consistent late pick-ups without significant communication may lead to dismissal from the program.

ORIENTATION FOR CHILDREN

Entering a program is a big step for most children, and each child handles it differently. Some children come eagerly the first day and continue to make an easy transition. Others may feel hesitant at first but quickly become comfortable. Still other children may hesitate and take more time to get comfortable. It is also possible for a child to come eagerly for a few days or weeks, and upon realizing that it is a permanent part of their schedule, they may show some difficulties with coming to the program. We acknowledge that each child's style in adjusting to a new environment is unique and we will partner with you to provide the support needed for a happy adjustment.

The entry process is carefully planned to make the children's first days as reassuring as possible. The child's first experience will be a visit to the classroom to become familiar with the space and the teaching team. Starting the following week, the regular school schedule begins. Parents should plan to be available during these days in case your child is having a challenging time being separated from you. Parents and teachers may collaborate on alternate plans for children whose separation requires a more individualized approach. For children who start school at other points during the year, we develop a plan to help them adapt as quickly as possible.

ROUTINES AND TRANSITIONS

A Typical Day

Greeting: Staff greets each child and family as they enter the classroom.

Settling In: After following the arrival routine, children choose from a variety of activities.

Circle Time: Children meet as a classroom community with their teacher to discuss the school day and learn about key concepts related to a central topic. Opportunities for language acquisition, concept and vocabulary development are provided.

Activity Time: Children choose from a range of independent and/or teacher-directed activities from a variety of areas such as: art, blocks, dramatic play, games, writing center, sensory activities, puzzles and other manipulatives.

Group Time: Children meet with their classroom staff for snack and story time. Classroom staff plans music, movement, and other skill building activities.

Outdoor Time: Children go outside every day including rainy weather except in extreme weather conditions. Children choose from a wide variety of activities including sand play, tricycle riding, dramatic play, nature exploration, gardening, climbing, sliding, and other large motor games, as well as art, reading/writing and music/movement.

Dismissal: Teachers conduct a closing circle, sing a goodbye song and will signal the parents/guardians that they may come in to reconnect with their children.

NOTE: Specific classroom schedules can be found posted on the information board by the entrance door to the classroom. Teachers will provide detailed information about the classroom schedule at the Curriculum/Back to School Parent Night each Fall.

SNACK

Snack is prepared by an Educational Assistant, who has a Pima County Health Department Food Handlers Card, following the AZDHS guidelines for snacks to ensure adequate nutrition is provided. The snack menu is posted in the kitchen and on the small bulletin board inside each classroom. It will also be shared via ParentSquare posts.

Because of the presence of food allergies, we prepare snacks at school. Families of children with special dietary restrictions should consult with the Principal to develop an individualized plan. Our snacks are served “family-style” where teaching staff and other adults, if present, sit and eat with the children while engaging them in conversation. Children work on self-help skills, social interaction and manners. Children are encouraged to try new foods, but never forced to eat anything. We allow children to self-determine the right amount of food to eat, which promotes healthy eating habits. We never use food as a reward for good behavior.

LUNCH

Families provide lunches in labeled lunchboxes for children participating in the full day program. The school does not have space for refrigerating children’s lunches, so please use cold packs to keep items at appropriately safe temperatures until lunchtime. We encourage parents to send healthy foods for lunches. Ideally, a lunchbox should contain a protein food (ex. turkey, ham, tuna, peanut butter), a whole-grain food (ex. bread, crackers), a fruit, a vegetable and milk or water to drink. We discourage parents from sending chips, soda, sweetened beverages, candy, or sweet treats (ex. Twinkies, cupcakes).

NAP/REST TIME

Nap/Rest Time is a regular part of our full day program, though children who have outgrown a nap are able to participate in activities in the classroom while the children who nap sleep in another classroom. Nap mats and nap mat covers are provided by the school. Mats will be disinfected after each use and nap mat covers will be laundered daily.

THE CHILD’S BELONGINGS

For your child's safety, dress your child with proper shoes - sturdy, closed-toe, rubber-soled shoes (no flip-flops). For your convenience, please choose washable clothes that you are not too concerned about possibly getting dirty. Send an extra change of clothing for your child on the first day in case a child’s clothes become wet or soiled. Please include a shirt, shorts/pants, socks, and underwear and **label all clothes** with your child's name. Remember to update this extra set as the weather changes and as your child grows!

Provide adequate outer clothing for your child and label all items. We spend time outside every day, except in thunderstorms or in environmental conditions that pose a health hazard, such as severe heat or air pollution.

We prefer that your child leave toys or things that are breakable at home. These often are mislaid and/or picked up by other children, causing upsets and disagreements that could have been avoided.

Children play hard and need enough fluid to stay well hydrated. Thirst is not always a good indicator of the need for fluid. Children may already be dehydrated by the time they are thirsty. We

will have drinking water available at all times. In accordance with Arizona's Empower Program, staff will offer 4 water breaks throughout the day, actively encouraging children to drink. Water will be the beverage of choice for rehydrating children. We discourage the use of sugar-sweetened beverages to quench thirst and encourage parents to send a clean, fresh water bottle labeled with the child's name each day.

THE CHILD'S SIBLINGS

Our staffing is set for the number of children in each class, and the classroom arrangement, materials, and routines fit the developmental level of the class. For all of these reasons, we cannot accommodate family requests for children's siblings to join in classroom or outdoor activities. Siblings may accompany a parent or other caregiver to the classroom at greeting or dismissal time.

We schedule evening events during the year, such as the Trunk or Treat Event and Pajama Night, for families to attend together. Also, the Family Faculty Organization (FFO) events are usually designed for the entire family.

For parent meetings and conferences that involve the whole staff, we have neither the space nor the staff to provide childcare. Please make other arrangements for all of your children during these events so that all staff and adult family members can give their full attention to discussing our important partnership.

HOLIDAYS AND BIRTHDAYS

At Valley View Early Learning Center, we base our activities on the interests of the children and not around calendar events. During the holiday season, VVELC maintains a policy of neutrality. We do not celebrate holidays within the school day. Each school day is a regular, predictable day. Conversations about the holidays may come up among the children in the classroom. However, these conversations are child initiated and not teacher directed. If VVELC has an activity at the school site that coordinates with a holiday, such as Trunk or Treat, it is scheduled as an optional event families may choose to attend.

As part of our emphasis on family identity and respect for diversity, we encourage children to talk about their family tradition. Age-appropriate activities may be planned to involve the children in preparing for simple celebrations and to help them contribute to family events (e.g., basic cooking, making gifts, and so forth). We limit our school celebrations to very brief spans of time and attempt to maintain our regular school routine.

Birthday celebrations for young children can be a special time to share with friends at school and, when possible, for families to join the celebration. **It is our school's practice to not celebrate birthdays with food of any kind. Please do not send any food or gifts for children.** Please contact your child's teacher to find out how birthdays are celebrated in the classroom. If you plan an additional birthday celebration outside of school time, please mail invitations from home unless the entire class is invited.

ACCREDITATION

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has created 10 standards that measure the quality of early childhood programs. The standards were created by a panel of early childhood experts and are based on the latest early childhood research. We earned our NAEYC accreditation and continue to reflect on our practice to ensure that we are providing the highest quality of care possible for your children by:

1. Promoting positive relationships for all children and adults to encourage each child's sense of individual worth and belonging.
2. Implementing programming that fosters all areas of child development: cognitive, emotional, language, physical, and social.
3. Using developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate effective teaching approaches.
4. Providing ongoing assessment of a child's learning and development to inform teaching practices and communicate the child's progress to the family.
5. Promoting the nutrition and health of children, and to protect children and staff from injury and illness.
6. Employing a teaching staff that has the educational qualifications, knowledge, and professional commitment necessary to promote children's learning and development, and to support families' diverse needs and interests.
7. Establishing and maintaining collaborative relationships with each child's family that are sensitive to culture, language and composition of the family.
8. Establishing relationships with and using the resources of the community to support the achievement of program goals.
9. Providing a safe and healthy physical environment.
10. Implementing strong personnel, fiscal, and program management policies so that all children, families, and staff have high-quality experiences.

In addition, we are licensed by the Arizona Department of Health Services Office of Child Care Licensing. Copies of the AZDHS regulations are available to parents in the VVELC office. The Principal collaborates with teaching staff and support staff to guide the documentation of procedures and complete the required paperwork for state licensure as well as NAEYC accreditation. We would be happy to discuss any aspect of licensing or accreditation with interested families.

INTERACTION GUIDELINES

Valley View Early Learning Center staff members follow the ethical principles of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. We share the following core values as guides for interactions among staff members, between staff and children, between staff and parents, between staff and district employees, etc.

- We strive to respect each individual and work to create a positive emotional climate for all learners, with sensitivity to differences in age, ability, background, language, culture, religion, and family structure.

- We use direct eye contact, smiles, warm tones of voice, positive touch, social conversations, and joint laughter to support the development of effective working relationships.
- Our partnership in learning is supported by regular, reciprocal communication, affirming recognition of effort and accomplishment, predictable, developmentally appropriate responsiveness to initiative, emotion, and concerns, and proactive conflict resolution.
- We are committed to reaching out to people of different races, genders, ethnicity, and ability, and we strive to create an environment of inclusion that celebrates our differences and highlights our commonalities.

Because our mission is multifaceted, we aim to build positive relationships with all learning partners by appropriately balancing quality of care for the group with services tailored to individual needs. Our goal is to develop a caring community for learning through broad participation and involvement in program improvement for all of our staff, families, and district partners. Our teaching teams are committed to making strong home/school connections through frequent communication and open sharing of information.

DAILY STRUCTURE AND ACTIVITIES

The Arizona State Early Learning Standards are used to guide our planning of classroom activities and experiences. Basic skills and concepts are introduced through the use of daily interest areas and table choices based on a developmentally appropriate objective. Adaptations and modifications are made by the staff to meet the needs of each individual child's developmental level and interest. Interest areas and table choices focus on pre-kindergarten skills and include the areas of: Language/Literacy, Writing, Math, Science/Discovery, Sensory Play, Dramatic Play, Manipulative/Fine Motor Skills, Block Play and Art (emphasis on process). Circle time activities introduce skills that are developmentally appropriate in the areas of language and emergent literacy, math, social skills, and music and movement.

Our understanding of children guides our decision-making. We view children as competent, full of wonder, willing to investigate, critique, reflect, and collaborate. This understanding shapes our decisions about how to arrange our classroom environment, schedule our days, and plan our activities.

Teachers pay careful attention to the use of space and time. The classroom environment sets the tone, inviting children to explore, collaborate, reflect, and communicate using a range of media. The schedule each day allows for long stretches of open-ended time during which children can pursue their questions, passions, and developmental themes.

Teachers consider relationships to be central. Teachers emphasize relationship building and cooperation among children, and between teachers and children. Teachers actively seek out collaboration with other teachers and with families, asking and encouraging questions about children's play, and sharing their observations. When we ask families to share their perspectives and invite them to help us make decisions about classroom life and activities, we enrich our understanding and include families in the life children live at school.

CURRICULUM

Our curriculum is developed using the Arizona State Early Learning Standards as a guide. Basic skills and concepts are introduced and taught through the use of daily interest areas and table choices based on a developmentally appropriate objective. Skills and instruction are adapted and modified by teachers to meet the needs of each individual child's developmental level and interest.

Interest areas and table choices focus on pre-kindergarten skills and include the areas of: Language/Literacy, Writing, Math, Science/Discovery, Sensory Play, Dramatic Play, Manipulative/Fine Motor Skills, Block Play and Art (emphasis on process). Circle time activities teach and encourage skills that are developmentally appropriate in the areas of language and emergent literacy, math, social skills, and music and movement.

Arizona State Early Learning Standards*Adapted and modified by certified teachers to implement basic skills

Social Emotional	Language & Literacy	Math	Science
Knowledge of Self *Self-awareness *Recognition and expression of feelings	Oral Language Development *Listening & Understanding *Speaking & Communicating	Number Sense & Operation *Number sense *Numerical operations	Inquiry *Observations, questions & hypotheses *Investigation *Analysis & conclusions *Communication
Social Interactions w/others *Separation & Cooperation	Pre-Reading Process *Print awareness *Book handling skills *Sounds & rhythms of language *Letter knowledge *Vocabulary development *Comprehending stories	Data Analysis *Collection & organization *Data analysis	
Responsibility for Self & Others *Self-control *Respect	Pre-Writing Process *Written expression	Patterns *Creating, copying, extending patterns	
		Geometry & Measurement *Spatial relationships & geometry *Measurement (non-standard/standard units)	
		Structure/Logic *Matching *Sorting *Describing relationships	
Social Studies	Physical Development/Health & Safety	Fine Arts	Approaches to Learning
American History *Research skills *Making connections	Physical & Motor Development *Gross Motor Skills (balancing, control, coordination) *Fine Motor Skills	Visual Art *Creating art *Art in context *Art as inquiry	*Curiosity *Initiative *Persistence *Creativity *Problem-solving *Confidence
World History *Asks questions about similarities/differences in people *Describes characteristics of community	Health *Hygiene *Demonstrates healthy habits (eating, resting, personal health routines)	Music & Creative Movement *Creating music and movement *Music and movement in context/inquiry	

Civics & Government *Rights, responsibilities, roles of citizenship *Demonstrates responsible behavior	Safety *Demonstrates environmental safety practices & routines	Dramatic Play *Creating dramatic play *Dramatic play in context *Dramatic play as inquiry	
Geography *Describes location & direction of places they live within the community *Describes physical features of environment			
Economics *Awareness of goods & services			

VELC uses Emergent Curriculum instead of a written curriculum

Emergent curriculum describes the kind of curriculum that develops while exploring what is socially and culturally relevant, intellectually engaging, and personally meaningful to children. The basic idea is that organic, whole learning evolves from the interaction of the classroom participants. In emergent curriculum, both adults and children have initiative and make decisions. This power to impact curriculum decisions and directions means that sometimes curriculum is also negotiated between what interests children and what adults know is necessary for children’s education and development. Ideas for curriculum emerge from responding to the interests, questions, and concerns generated by a particular group of people at a particular time. Emergent curriculum is never built on children’s interests alone; teachers and parents also have interests worth bringing into the curriculum. The values, beliefs and experiences of all the adults involved help the classroom culture evolve. The curriculum is called emergent because it evolves, and it is always open to new possibilities that were not thought of during the initial planning process.

Emergent curriculum arises naturally from adult-child interactions and situations that allow for "teachable moments". It connects learning with experience and prior learning. It includes all interests of children and responds to their interests rather than focusing on a narrow, individual, or calendar driven topic. It is process rather than product driven.

In traditional classrooms the teacher initiates the curriculum. Each unit has a theme and activities are planned and prepared in advance. An emergent curriculum is one that builds upon the interests, experiences, cultures and languages of the children in a particular group. It is often spontaneous and responsive to the immediate interests of a group of children. Topics are driven by the ideas, excitement, information and questions from the children themselves.

Ideas can be supported and extended by providing equipment, books, craft supplies, and experiences through which the children can learn more about their natural interests and curiosities. The teacher is not the “expert” who knows all and teaches the children but rather s/he co-explores alongside the children and observes and encourages their discoveries.

The initial topic may sprout off in many directions combining several seemingly unrelated topics. Each topic may last a day, a week, a month or more – as long as the children are interested in pursuing the ideas. The teacher can develop a plan by observing and listening to the children at play or by asking the children open-ended questions.

Key Principles of Emergent Curriculum

Our understanding of children guides our decision-making. We view children as competent, full of wonder, willing to investigate, critique, reflect, and collaborate. This understanding shapes our decisions about how to arrange our classroom environment, schedule our days, and plan our curriculum.

Teachers pay careful attention to the use of space and time. The classroom environment sets the tone, inviting children to explore, collaborate, reflect, and communicate using a range of media. The schedule each day allows for long stretches of open-ended time during which children can pursue their questions, passions, and developmental themes.

Curriculum planning is based on observation. Teachers observe children as they play, paying close attention to recurring themes, developmental issues, and underlying questions. Observations guide curriculum planning, as we create opportunities for children to deepen their thinking, represent their understandings, and encounter new perspectives.

Teachers consider relationships to be central. Teachers emphasize relationship building and cooperation among children, and between teachers and children. Teachers actively seek out collaboration with other teachers and with families, asking and encouraging questions about children's play, and sharing their observations. When we ask families to share their perspectives and invite them to help us make decisions about classroom life and curriculum, we enrich our understanding and include families in the life children live at school.

Outdoor Environment

We believe the outdoor environment is an extension of the classroom. The children have the opportunity to work at outside interest areas, which include writing, literacy, dramatic play, sensory, science, and fine/gross motor skills. Children are encouraged to engage in activities that build upon skill levels, which gives them the confidence to attempt higher-level skills.

The benefits of physical activity for children include:

1. Reduced risk of developing heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol
2. Healthy bones and muscles
3. Improved strength and endurance
4. Good mental health and cognition
5. Increased self-esteem
6. Healthy weight

Early physical activity and exposure to structured activity and physical skills can lay the groundwork for an active lifestyle as an adult. In accordance with Arizona's Empower Program and current health recommendations, children enrolled in our full day program are offered at least 120 minutes of active playtime each day, including both structured (teacher-led) and unstructured (child directed, free play). Our teachers lead children in activities promoting gross motor skill development throughout the day, accumulating the recommended 60 minutes of teacher-led activity by the end of the day. Active time or outdoor play is not withheld from children for misbehavior.

Field Trips

At VVELC, we do not take the children on field trips away from the school premises. We choose to bring learning opportunities to the children, so that they are kept safe and feel comfortable with their surroundings. Children are always supervised by teaching staff when visitors are present at school.

DEVELOPMENTAL OBJECTIVES

Since 1988, the highly skilled staff at VVELC have nurtured young children's social, cognitive, emotional and physical development. We have specified goals for 3-, 4-, and 5-year olds based on the Arizona Early Learning Standards in each of the following developmental areas that are assessed with the Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment.

- 1) **Social-Emotional**- regulating emotions and behavior, establishing and sustaining positive relationships, participating cooperatively and constructively
- 2) **Physical** - demonstrating traveling, balancing, gross motor manipulative and fine motor strength and coordination.
- 3) **Language** – listening and understanding increasingly complex language, using language to express thoughts and needs, using appropriate conversational and communication skills.
- 4) **Cognitive** – demonstrating positive approaches to learning, remembering and connecting experiences, using classification skills, using symbols and images to represent something not present.
- 5) **Literacy** – demonstrating phonological awareness, knowledge of the alphabet, print and its uses, comprehending and responding to books and other texts, demonstrating emergent writing skills.
- 6) **Mathematics** – using number concepts and operations, exploring and describing spatial relationships and shapes, comparing and measuring, demonstrating knowledge of patterns.
- 7) **Science and Technology** – Using scientific inquiry skills and tools and other technology to perform tasks, demonstrating knowledge of characteristics of living things, of physical properties of objects and materials, and of the Earth's environment.
- 8) **Social Studies** – demonstrating knowledge of self, showing basic understanding of people and how they live, exploring change related to familiar people or places, and demonstrating simple geographic knowledge.
- 9) **Fine Arts** – exploring visual arts, musical concepts and expression, dance, drama and movement through actions and language.

ASSESSMENT

Teaching teams use the nine (9) areas and 36 objectives in the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment program as a flexible framework for planning learning experiences to promote the growth and development of each individual child. We support children in doing as much for themselves as possible. We strive to support a variety of social experiences by organizing our time and space to balance individual, pair, small group, and whole group activities. Staff members serve as coaches as children practice social skills involved in peer interactions, friendship formation, and conflict resolution. Throughout the day, we engage children in conversation, with extra support for peer conversation as needed.

Assessment is naturally integrated into the course of every day as ongoing teacher observation of group patterns and individual development is used to adjust the program to better support group and individual progress. Teaching teams meet weekly to identify the group's current interests and needs and then plan accordingly for the next week's explorations. At times, these reflections indicate the need for altering the classroom environment, shifting the topic focus, trying new teaching strategies, etc. If concerns about individual children's development arise and are not readily remedied via classroom adaptations, staff initiates a dialogue with colleagues and parents to plan approaches to try at both home and school.

Twice per year, the teachers combine these informal assessment techniques with more systematic assessment of each child relative to the developmental objectives for the purpose of describing each child's developmental progress. Teaching teams work together to conduct these systematic assessments, though the child's primary teacher takes the lead in summarizing the findings. These descriptions are shared with parents, both in writing and via personal conferences. Fall and Spring conference reports include narrative descriptions of children's progress in all developmental areas. Staff – parent dialogue during conferences and throughout the school year strengthens our understanding of each child's developmental profile and often leads to ideas for individualizing both staff and parent support of children's progress as well as plans for smooth transitions to elementary school.

Because of the detailed discussion of children's progress, conferences last approximately 20-30 minutes and are not appropriate for children other than nursing infants to attend. Conferences will be available for in-person meetings or virtually to accommodate family's schedules.

Assessment Procedures

Teachers attend formal training through the Arizona Department of Education in using the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment tool. Most VVELC assessment is informal, with direct observation by familiar staff members as the primary method. Staff document observations in their own unique ways, though most record anecdotal notes, take photographs of constructions/interactions, and collect samples of the children's artwork, journal entries, and other projects.

Because even young children are savvy enough, however, to avoid tasks in areas that are difficult for them and to rely on peers to support their performance when avoidance is not possible, our staff will occasionally conduct more formal, individual assessments focused on precisely determining what a child knows or can do. Whenever possible, these assessments are designed as typical classroom activities and are widely distributed in time. For example, a teacher might assess knowledge of letters and numerals by having the child be the caller in a bingo game played with peers. Gross motor skills may be assessed by having children practice an obstacle course that is set up in the motor room or outside. With individuals and in small group settings, teachers often use puzzles or other manipulatives to check a child's knowledge of shapes, counting ability, etc. All of these assessments are conducted within the regular program space and during the typical program hours. In cases where a child's performance on these more formal assessments is not consistent with more informal observations, the assessment will be repeated and conducted by another staff member, so that the results can be verified.

Data from both informal and formal assessments are incorporated into the conference reports written by the child's primary teacher in October and April for each child. VVELC assessments and conference forms are sensitive to diversity in the following ways. Assessments involve only activities that are familiar to the children, and every effort is made to eliminate verbal directions that might not be understood by a child with a language disability or limited English proficiency. Teachers may eliminate from the conference report any items that cannot be fairly assessed because of the child's language abilities. Conference forms are routinely adapted for children with special needs at the level that qualifies them for the support of itinerant therapists or full-time special education support staff.

Occasionally, staff and/or parents identify the need for additional screening and referral for professional diagnostic assessment. In those cases, staff and parents typically include the Principal and Special Education staff in determining how to move forward in the best interest of the child.

VVELC does not conduct any norm-referenced or standardized assessments of preschool children for comparison purposes. At present, we are using the assessments described above, together with our professional judgment, rather than a standardized screening to determine whether to recommend that further professional screening should be initiated. If you would like more specific information regarding our screening and assessment methods, choice, use, scoring and/or interpretation, we would be happy to provide it to you upon request.

Uses of Assessment Results

Results of VVELC assessments are primarily used to shape the current year's program and to discuss individual children's developmental progress with parents so that we can work together to best support each child's growth.

In addition, the group results impact the school's quality improvement process via each teaching staff's annual evaluation and the whole school annual evaluation, both of which are conducted in May in preparation for enhancements implemented for the next year.

Assessment results are confidential and are kept in a private location, typically the teacher's password protected computer. Hardcopies of the final assessment reports are kept in the child's folder in a locked cabinet located at the front office.

SCREENING

Our program completes screenings within 45 days of enrollment. Hearing and vision screenings will be scheduled during the school hours. The screenings are conducted by CFSD RN, on-site health assistant and on-site speech pathologist. Teachers will complete a 45-day developmental screening as well. Teachers observe each child in their class within 45 days of enrollment in the program. A completed screening tool indicating developmental observations/concerns is shared with the Principal for review. Parents will be notified of screening results within 10 days of the administrative review if concerns are noted.

Children Have Special Needs

Classes composed of children with diverse abilities provide enrichment for everyone through learning about each other's similarities and differences. In keeping with the spirit of the goals of VVELC, we will provide for children with special needs in our classes. Three- to five-year old children with vision, hearing, speech, language or learning differences receive appropriate special services to enable them to maximize their preschool experience. Rather than being singled out, these children's needs are met, to the maximum extent possible, within their peer groups. This is achieved through a team approach that includes preschool teachers, special education teachers, educational assistants, a speech and language specialist, and other specialists and therapists. Our goal is to provide early interventions that may reduce or eliminate the need for special education services in elementary school.

Parents of children in Special Education must call the school office on or before the day that their child will be late or absent. Attendance is recorded daily and by calling the school, we are able to record your child's absence as excused. This is especially important as state funding for special education students is directly related to their attendance.

Should families need information about other resources in the community, including health, mental health, assessment, educational services, etc., our program staff would be happy to provide some local options in the community. We maintain a current list of services available in the community at the reception area and it is available upon request.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Because the staff at VVELC works as a team, each adult knows and interacts at times with every child. Therefore, all observations and other assessment data may be shared with all staff members. Information about family situations, special needs, and other sensitive issues is shared on an as needed basis with the staff that works directly with the child. All adults working in VVELC sign the following confidentiality agreement.

"As an adult working, observing, and/or regularly on site at Valley View Early Learning Center, I may become privy to confidential information regarding children and families. It is of the utmost importance that I realize that all such information is strictly personal and confidential and can only be shared within the confines of Valley View Early Learning Center. I will discuss children's behavior out of the hearing distance of the children, and I will discuss with families, children, and staff for professional purposes only. When I encounter families, children or staff outside the school, I will be courteous but use discretion. I understand that written authorization is required before disclosing any information regarding a child to an outside agency or individual. I know that confidentiality is an ethical obligation and that it is a requirement for my continued involvement at Valley View Early Learning Center. By signing this statement, I agree to understand and practice Valley View Early Learning Center's confidentiality policy at all times."

Official written records for each child are kept in files in a locked cabinet in the VVELC office and released only to the individuals working with a child, as described above, or those for whom parents sign a written release. These files include enrollment forms, conference reports, health assessments provided by physicians, reports of diagnostic assessments released to the school by

parents, individual education plans, etc. Staff documentation of children's behavior and development, including specialized records for children whose special circumstances require extra classroom documentation are kept in classroom locations accessible to staff but out of the reach of children and out of sight of classroom visitors.

HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES

At all times, health and safety are top priorities at VVELC. Each individual's vigilance regarding health and safety issues contributes significantly to our effectiveness. Always assume that you are the only one who notices a problem or potential problem and bring it to the attention of a staff person.

Staff Responsibility

Staff members are responsible for maintaining a healthy, safe environment. We begin with our own health by submitting annual health appraisals and follow strict illness exclusions. All staff will complete a self-screening upon entering the building each day. All staff members submit criminal record and child abuse clearances as part of the employment process. We participate in an annual pediatric first aid/CPR class, fire safety class, and review of our emergency procedures. Each classroom has a well-equipped first aid kit, as do bathrooms outside. We practice evacuation drills specified in our Emergency Action Plan in a serious but non-dramatic fashion with the children at a rate of one per month. Staff members are responsible for daily checks of their classrooms and shared spaces for hazards such as missing safety covers on outlets, elevated water temperature in the bathrooms, trash or food in the outdoor classroom, etc.

VVELC is a smoke-free environment with a safe water supply from the City of Tucson Water and ventilation, heating and cooling systems are maintained in accordance with national standards. VVELC was built in 2008 and expanded in 2016 and is free of asbestos and lead. CFSD Facilities Department does periodic checks for other environmental hazards, as well as diligently monitors the status of our safety equipment and uses an integrated pest management program.

With the help of our custodial staff, we follow NAEYC's frequency table for cleaning and sanitation throughout the school. As needed staff will increase the frequency of cleaning high touch surfaces and children's bathrooms throughout the day. All staff members will follow precautions to minimize spread of infectious disease and store hazardous materials in cabinets out of reach of children.

We follow parent and/or health professional recommendations regarding children who have allergies, and we limit classroom pets to fish, amphibians, worms, and insects. Our outdoor classroom has many shaded areas for the children to play. We encourage children to wear hats provided from home. During summer months when children are outside for a longer time, we will apply mid-day sunblock provided by the parents with a minimum UVB and UVA protection of SPF 30 if a sunscreen consent form is on file. Families should sunscreen their child before coming to school.

Family Responsibility

As part of the enrollment process, parents must complete an emergency information form (blue card) and give permission for staff members to administer basic first aid to their child. Review of this emergency information is required every semester, so we typically conduct a review when parents are at school for their conferences. In addition, parents or guardians should contact the school any time there is a change in the emergency contact information. Additional consent forms for multimedia, release of information and topical product application are also required.

Prior to the child's first day of school, parents are required to submit a current health assessment of the child including either proof of the recommended immunizations or a signed statement indicating that the family has objections to immunization. Thereafter, parents must submit an updated form after the yearly well-child checkup. Parents of children speaking English as a second language are encouraged to complete a form detailing the children's level of proficiency and then invited to dialogue with teachers regarding strategies to assist the child's transition as necessary. Parents of children with allergies must provide us with information regarding necessary adaptations of activities or environment, responses staff should take in the event of an allergic reaction, and any necessary staff training. Parents of children with other special needs should contact the Principal for guidance regarding necessary documentation and advance planning with the staff. This information is confidential but must be available to administrators, teaching staff, and regulatory authorities upon request.

Illness

Staff members will greet children at the beginning of the day. Staff will conduct a visual screening of the child as they enter the classroom and monitor children's appearance throughout the day for any symptoms. Children who become sick at school will be removed from the group and cared for until parents come for the child.

The VVELC community relies on the adult family members' thoughtful assessment of their child's health before sending their child to school. Even if your child begs to come to school, please keep them at home if any of the following symptoms are evident. Any of these may indicate the beginning of an illness, which might be easily spread to other children and staff.

- Fever above 100 degrees within the past 24 hours
- Deep or dry cough
- Sore throat
- Muscle or body aches
- Excessive running nose
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Headache
- Diarrhea
- Rash, bump or other out-of-the-ordinary skin conditions
- Continuous sneezing
- Vomiting within the past 24 hours
- Unusual irritability, listlessness, fatigue

In most cases in which medication is required, physicians recommend that the child be on medication for a full 24 hours (ex. Antibiotic) and be fever free without the use of medicine for 24 hours before returning to school. In addition, please keep your child home until the child is well enough to participate fully in both indoor and outdoor activities. We do not have staff members available to supervise children indoors while the rest of the class is outdoors. **If medication needs to be given while the child is at school, please bring the medication to the office in its original labeled container with written directions from the doctor and complete a “Medical Consent” form. Medication will be stored in the front office and administered by the Health Assistant according to the written directions.**

When your child will not be in school, please call the school at 520-209-7650 between 7:30 and 9:30am. Please let the main office know if your child has contracted a contagious condition or disease (ex. strep throat, pink eye, etc.) so that we can notify other families and staff members of possible exposure.

Hand Washing

Because hand washing is the #1 preventive measure to avoid the spread of disease, we explicitly teach, scaffold, and monitor hand-washing procedures that involve the use of liquid soap and running water, with vigorous and thorough rubbing for at least 20 seconds (the length of a children’s song), followed by paper towel drying and faucet contact. We, and the children, wash our hands upon entry. We also wash hands before and after snacks and meals, before and after food preparation, after toileting, after contact with bodily fluids, after play at a sensory table, after re-entry from the outdoor classroom as well as after any messy activities. Adults will assist children that are not yet ready to complete all the steps independently. Adults also wash their hands after assisting with toileting, handling garbage or cleaning, and before and after feeding a child or administering medication. Washing hands has been naturally worked into the daily schedule.

Hand Washing Steps

1. Wet the hands with warm, running water.
2. Apply liquid soap.
3. Wash the fronts, backs, in between fingers and palms using pressure while rubbing the hands together for at least 20 seconds.
4. Rinse all the soap and soil from the hands with running water, allowing the used water to go down the drain. Leave the water running.
5. Dry the hands completely with a disposable paper towel.
6. Turn off the water with the used towel to prevent re-contaminating the clean hands with germs and soil from the faucet handles. Discard paper towels immediately in the trash can.

Injury

Young children often experience falls or bumps during the course of a day, especially in the outdoor classroom. Usually, they do not result in injury and are handled with simple comfort, a drink of water, or a sympathetic Band-Aid or ice pack (may not be necessary but comforting). When children sustain a cut, bruise, or other injury, staff members will provide treatment according to procedures specified in our pediatric first aid training. An “Ouch Report” will be shared with

families. Should an injury involve any contact with the child's head, staff will verbally report the injury to parents, guardians or caregivers, recommend treatment by a medical professional if appropriate, and complete an head injury report. Copies are kept in the accident/injury logbook and given to the family.

Parents or guardians will be notified immediately in case of a more serious accident and prompt action will be taken including contacting EMS personnel if the situation warrants. If necessary, we will accompany the child to the hospital preferred by the family in the ambulance. In these cases, incident and injury reports are supplemented by the EMS reports.

STAFFING AND SUPERVISION

The ADHS Office of Child Care Licensing allows a 1:15 ratio for preschool age children. However, we maintain better staff to child ratios. These ratios are applicable both indoors and outdoors.

Minimum of 1:6 for Young 3's
Minimum of 1:9 for Mixed Age

At any time when children are present in the school, there are at least two adults present. Staff members, as a group, supervise preschool children primarily by sight. Classroom space is designed so that there are no areas of the room where children can hide. Supervision by sound is permissible for short intervals, such as when a child goes to the bathroom from the classroom or outdoors.

STAFF TEAMS

Valley View Early Learning Center is staffed by teams of educators. The administrative team includes a Principal, Jennifer Dooley, School Secretary, Margie Brown, and the Director of Community Schools, Travis Kolter. Each classroom includes one certified teacher and one educational assistant teacher in addition to Special Education staff when special needs children are present. The Special Education team includes two special education teachers, a speech/language pathologist, a physical therapist, an occupational therapist and a psychologist. All teachers and administrators have many years of experience in education, as well as a bachelor's degree and often an advanced degree in early childhood education, psychology, or a related field. Educational Assistants complement each team.

All Valley View Early Learning Center (VVELC) employees are hired and managed according to the Human Resources policies of Catalina Foothills School District. They are thoroughly oriented, earn a competitive salary/hourly pay, have paid planning time, and receive full benefits. VVELC provides a professional development program that includes a minimum of 18 hours per year, as well as supports each individual's goals for growth via additional seminars, college coursework, publications, and professional experiences.

We make every effort for all children to know and be known by all adults in our school environment so that they are comfortable interacting with and seeking assistance from any adult. Each child is assigned to a primary teacher and educational assistant teacher who work with all children in a particular group. Other staff may work in the core classroom to gain familiarity with the children and routines for each group so they can effectively substitute when a staff member is absent. When

absences are planned in advance, we recruit substitutes who have long-term familiarity with our program, often former teachers or others who have trained at VVELC.

Because our program runs on an academic calendar, children typically stay in the same class with the same staff from August through May. Children may transition to a new teaching staff if the family and principal deem it necessary and a move is dependent on program availability.

PARENTS AS PARTNERS

Valley View Early Learning Center offers adult family members and other caregivers a variety of ways to become involved in the child's school community, to participate in family activities, and to confer with the staff to build a strong bond between home and school. During the year, each teacher meets with parents to share information about the child's school and home life. Regular communication is encouraged among families, caregivers, and the school staff so that multiple perspectives on the child's development and interests can be used to enhance the child's experience. In addition to the detailed family handbook, we have scheduled parent meetings and conferences, frequent spontaneous interaction and share other information with families via ParentSquare or email.

If any parents would benefit from translation services at conferences or for key documents, we can and will provide assistance in finding a translator who is fluent in the relevant language. Our main communication tool, ParentSquare, will automatically translate the posts/messages into the family's preferred language. We can also guide families to culturally and linguistically appropriate services, if needed.

If you have questions or have experienced a problem at home or school, please approach the child's primary teacher or the Principal directly. Changes in care-giving arrangements, the death of a pet, an extended absence of a parent, etc. can all cause changes in a child's demeanor and behavior at school; therefore, timely communication helps the staff respond most effectively to the child. We make every effort to dialogue with children and families in a positive manner to plan strategies, resolve issues, and provide assistance in a timely and effective manner. Please also feel free to suggest ways that we can strengthen our partnership with you as together we seek to provide a high-quality learning environment for everyone in our school community. If you need to communicate at length with your child's teacher, please schedule a time either before or after school (8:00 to 8:30 am, 11:30-12:30pm or 3:00-3:30pm).

The popular family events, including Open House, Trunk or Treat, and Pajama Night, offer the whole family a chance to participate in the child's school. In addition, many parents or guardians extend their involvement by volunteering in school wide and/or classroom activities. We ask that you complete the parent involvement form so that we can use this information to arrange meetings, compose committees, and schedule activities according to parent preferences as much as possible. Committees support the school by managing our library of children's books, coordinating the Family Faculty Organization events, repairing broken toys and equipment, organizing family services such as school pictures and scholastic book sales, planning all fundraising events, and advising our program of family and community needs.

All parents or guardians are invited to participate in Conference Surveys and VVELC's annual program evaluation via a survey conducted in the spring. Feedback from these surveys contributes to our continuous quality improvement. Evaluation results, plans, and opportunities are highlighted in the first FFO meeting held during the school year and updated as necessary via email or ParentSquare posts.

Babysitting

VVELC Staff are not permitted to provide outside childcare for families whose child(ren) is enrolled at VVELC. The rationale for this policy involves important professional issues. Briefly, working for a family outside of school places the staff member in a position with the real potential of conflicting roles. This can occur both with regard to their relationship with the child and/or the parents. **Please remember this policy and do not ask our staff to babysit for your children.**

Cell Phone Usage

Valley View Early Learning Center is a cell-phone free zone. We ask that you refrain from using your cell phone in our parking lot and during drop off/pick up times. Smooth transitions at drop off and warm reunions at the end of the day are special times to be connecting with your child.

Parking Lot

The parking lot can be an extremely busy place during drop off and pick up times. Please use the Sunrise Drive south entrance and the Skyline Drive north entrance/exit to access our school parking lot. There is also an entry/exit using Campo Abierto. However, this is not an ideal entrance as it is used by neighboring businesses and residents and potentially interferes with the traffic pattern. Please drive slowly and be vigilant upon entering and exiting the parking lot. Idling vehicles in our parking lot for long periods of time are discouraged.

VOLUNTEERS/VISITORS

Parents/guardians who are willing to volunteer in the classroom after the children have adjusted to the new routines can inquire with the Principal. Any person who is wanting to volunteer on a regular basis or if a person is not a parent/guardian but wants to volunteer, a volunteer application must be completed through the district Human Resources office and a fingerprint clearance card must be obtained. Volunteers are permitted on campus per the school's request.

Visitors are allowed on campus with site approval. All visitors must secure a visitor's badge at the front desk. This serves as a sign to staff that this person has checked in at the front office and is permitted to be on campus.

BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

At VVELC, our rules and expectations are designed to help children learn to manage their behavior for effective interaction and cooperation. All staff guide and support children by clearly communicating in a positive manner and tone often including the language for the behavior that is

desired. For example, "Let's keep the sand in the sand table so that we have a lot to pour." Typically, the children are eager to act appropriately and are recognized for doing so. We design activities that are age appropriate in both task and duration to maximize positive interactions. Staff also carefully monitors the children's activities to anticipate and diffuse problems before they begin. A child who is losing interest in one activity may be redirected to another area that can spark renewed engagement.

Basic Behavior Expectations

Knowing and meeting expectations encourages independent action and fosters self-esteem. The students in each class will discuss behavior expectations throughout the year. As appropriate, each class will add specific examples relating to each of the items listed below.

School Rules:

- Be a kind friend.
- Follow the routine.
- Use a safe body and safe hands.
- Stay in your own space.
- Use your words.
- Use inside voices.
- Use materials appropriately.
- Help put everything back in its place.

All VVELC staff will:

- Provide limits in a calm, consistent, and respectful manner, which allows the child to grow in self-control and self-esteem.
- Respond to a child's challenging behavior, including physical aggression, in a manner that provides for the safety of the child and the others in the classroom.
- Help children learn to identify both positive and negative emotions, as well as to respond to them appropriately.
- Work with children to develop conflict resolution skills necessary to solve their disagreements in an appropriate manner.
- Help children express and acknowledge their choices.
- Help children describe problems, evaluate their actions, verbalize alternatives, and consider the perspective of others.

Children are guided and supported as they learn to accept the natural consequences of their actions. This approach includes positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior, redirection, reminders of classroom rules, modifying the classroom environment and/or daily schedule, and if necessary providing a supervised quiet time for the child to gain control. After a quiet time, the teacher invites the child to rejoin the group and reminds the child of the relevant expectations for the activity in progress.

Staff shall observe all children and document any problem behavior to help ascertain any patterns re: events, activities, and interactions, as well as any precipitating contextual factors. If a child's behavior problem persists or becomes dangerous to the other children in the class (e.g., punching,

kicking, temper tantrums), the teacher will bring the child to the office to regain composure and talk with the Principal. Such situations are rare at VVELC and are discussed thoroughly with the child, the teacher, and the parent to determine positive steps toward solution.

Families are referred to specialists for help with persistent problems that may be linked to developmental issues, with the goal being to support the child's successful inclusion in the classroom.

STEPS FOR ADDRESSING CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS

1. The behaviors of children shall be addressed by classroom staff as outlined by the Behavior Guidelines. This approach includes positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior, redirection, reminders of classroom rules, modifying the classroom environment and/or daily schedule, and providing a supervised quiet time for the child to gain control. Staff shall observe all children and use appropriate forms for documenting any atypical behavior to help ascertain any patterns re: events, activities, and interactions, as well as precipitating contextual factors.
2. When a child exhibits a challenging behavior on a continual basis that is not resolved through appropriate behavior management strategies, the teachers will plan a meeting with the Principal to discuss the challenging behavior and ask for further guidance. If relevant, Special Education staff will participate.
3. If the challenging behavior is still not resolved, the staff shall request a meeting with the child's parent(s). At the meeting, staff and parent(s) will collaboratively develop individualized strategies including a Behavior Plan to resolve the challenging behavior. During this process, teachers will keep the Principal and parents informed of progress in resolving the challenging behavior. Teachers will provide information to the parent(s) in written form with copies kept in the child's file. If a child's behavior results in an injury to another child or staff member, the child's parents will be notified as soon as possible and written documentation of the incident will be provided to the parents and placed in the child's file.
4. If the teachers feel that they need further assistance in resolving the challenging behavior, the Principal may request that the parents seek the assistance of an outside party. If the problem may be the result of a special need, a request by the parents to arrange for an evaluation of the child may occur. The goal of this behavior management process is to support the child's inclusion and success. If the parents refuse to pursue evaluation and the challenging behavior continues, the continued enrollment of the child will be reconsidered in accordance with the provisions in #6 below.
5. If the results of an outside evaluation suggest the need for accommodations for special needs, VVELC will provide these to district residents, or other appropriate accommodations as long as they are not an undue hardship on VVELC as outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Children outside of our district boundaries requiring evaluation will be referred to their home district.
6. If all the above steps fail to resolve the challenging behavior, VVELC may ask the parents to find an alternative educational placement for their child. VVELC will provide the parents with 4-weeks' notice when possible except where such notice is not reasonable because of safety concerns. VVELC will try to assist the parents with alternative placement.
7. Written documentation of all the above steps will be provided to the parents and placed in the child's file.

PROHIBITED PRACTICES & REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

If any staff or person from the child's family engages in a practice prohibited by the program while in the vicinity of VVELC, the Principal will take necessary steps to assure that there is no recurrence of the practice.

- Corporal or any type of physical punishment, including hitting, spanking, slapping, shaking, pinching, pulling limbs or other measures that produce physical pain, is not permitted.
- Withdrawal or the threat of withdrawal of food, rest, or bathroom opportunities is not permitted.
- Abusive, profane or derogatory language, including yelling and belittling, is not permitted.
- Any form of psychological abuse, including public or private humiliation, threats of physical punishment, rejecting, terrorizing, isolating, or corrupting a child, is not permitted.
- Any form of coercive tactics, including forcing a child to perform an action, rough handling, forcing a child to sit or be inactive, is not permitted.

All observations or other suspicions of child abuse or neglect will be immediately reported to the appropriate authorities no matter where the abuse might have occurred. If the parent or legal guardian of the child is suspected of abuse, the Principal will follow the guidance of the Department of Child Safety or the police department regarding notification of the parent or legal guardian. We are required by law to report within 24 hours of observing the child or hearing from the child.

A staff member who is accused of child abuse may be suspended or given leave without pay pending investigation of the accusation. Such caregivers may also be removed from the classroom and given a job that does not require interaction with children. Parents or legal guardians of suspected abused children will be notified. Parents or legal guardians of other children in the program will be contacted by the Principal if a caregiver is suspected of abuse so that they may share any concerns they have had. However, no accusation or affirmation of guilt will be made until the investigation is complete. Caregivers found guilty of child abuse will be summarily dismissed or relieved of their duties.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

The program staff encourages families to raise concerns and work collaboratively to find mutually satisfying solutions that staff incorporate into classroom practice. Any parent may follow the following procedure to resolve a school related problem:

1. Problem initially handled among the parties directly involved. Teaching staff will be available to families via emails, notes, phone, or in person communications.
2. If Step 1 does not solve the problem or if the parent is not comfortable speaking to the parties involved, the parent should speak to the Principal, who will attempt to resolve the problem. If the problem is not resolved, go to Step 3.
3. Address the problem, in writing, to the Director of Community Schools. If this does not result in satisfaction, go to Step 4.
4. Write a formal grievance to the Superintendent of Catalina Foothills School District.

BUILDING SECURITY

Our front office always has a staff member at the front desk to greet anyone that is entering the facility. Our other five emergency exits remain locked at all times. The emergency exits have illuminated exit signs and have video surveillance that can be seen from our front desk. Our exit doors are also alarmed with sound whenever they are opened.

EMERGENCY GUIDELINES

Valley View Early Learning Center has an Emergency Action Plan in place that includes evacuation of the building. Our first evacuation sites are the outdoor classroom or the parking lot. In the event of a long-term evacuation, we contact families as quickly as possible via phone and alerts in ParentSquare to notify them of the plan for reuniting them with their children. We have monthly evacuation drills so the children and staff are familiar with the procedures. An outline of the Emergency Action Plan can be viewed upon request at the front office. In an emergency or time-critical situation when the Principal is not present or reachable by phone, the School Secretary, Office Clerk and designated teacher decide collaboratively on a course of action.

WELLNESS POLICY & OTHER CFSD GOVERNING BOARD ADOPTED POLICIES

Catalina Foothills School District Governing Board has adopted Policy JL and Regulation JL-R, Student Wellness, in accordance with 42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq. (National School Lunch Act), 42 U.S.C. 1771 et seq. (Child Nutrition Act), ARS 15-242, and as recommended by the District Wellness Committee. Other CFSD Governing Board policies such as, Student Violence/Harassment/Intimidation/Bullying Policy JICK, Student Discipline Policy JK, Student Conduct Policy JIC, and Discipline Matrix JK-E can all be referenced on the CFSD website Board Policies under the "About us" tab. A copy of these policies can be viewed at the VVELC reception desk. We can also provide you with a copy if you prefer.

PESTICIDE APPLICATION

In accordance with EBAA-R all pesticide application information is available to parents upon request. A 48-hour advance notification of pesticide application will be posted on the front window.

INSURANCE/LICENSING

Valley View Early Learning Center carries liability and accident insurance.

VVELC is licensed and regulated by ADHS (Arizona Department of Health Services), Office of Child Care Licensure, 400 W. Congress, Suite 100, Tucson, AZ 85701, phone 520-628-6540. Inspection reports are available upon request from the Principal.

VVELC operates a kitchen for food service licensed by the Pima County Health Department, 3950 S. Country Club Rd. Ste. 100. Inspection reports are posted in the kitchen and are available upon request from the Principal.