

Table of contents

Philosophy	2
Our History	2
Our Staff	3
Preschool Hours	3
Sign In.....	3
Kid’s Day Out (KDO) program	4
Lunch Bunch.....	4
School forms	4
Discipline	5
Health/Illness	5
Snacks	6
Birthdays.....	6
Evaluations.....	7
Insurance	7
Clothing	7
Tuition Tips.....	8
Tuition Refunds	8
Curriculum	9
Newsletter	9
Emergency Planning.....	10
Toys from Home.....	10
Preschool Board.....	10
Parent Participation.....	11
Parent Professionalism.....	11
Aide Substitute Procedure	12
Nursery/Playroom.....	12
Aide Credit.....	12
What is High Scope?.....	13
The High Scope Daily Routine.....	14
NAEYC ACCREDITATION	15

Philosophy

The Stepping Stones program is based on the belief that young children are capable of making decisions and solving problems about activities that are interesting to them personally. We encourage them to become active-learners to discover, question and make decisions.

We also believe children learn through play. They learn through senses, muscles, curiosity, language, organizational abilities, repetition, communication and participation.

We strive to achieve a classroom community. Learning is a social activity and learners need others to succeed in their work. By working and playing with other children, parent helpers and teachers, the children not only develop their own personal socialization skills, but also develop a sense of community.

Our goal is for the child to be aware of the world he/she lives in and the fact that he/she is a unique and unrepeatable human being. We work at helping each child feel good about himself/herself and his/her abilities while providing a wide range of developmentally appropriate activities that broaden his/her horizon now and help him/her to become a life long learner.

Our History

Stepping Stones Preschool began as a non-profit preschool in 1974. The school became a non-profit parent participation preschool in 1985. You, as parents have the opportunity to enter the exciting world of a preschooler! The experience of seeing the world through the eyes of the children as they discover is very rewarding. Being actively involved by aiding in our classrooms, nursery, office or kitchen, you become a part of a young child's first experience outside of the home.

Working alongside the Stepping Stones staff, you become a partner in the life long learning process. We offer lower tuition rate for parents who agree to aide in the classrooms. You could be a member of the governing board, which is composed of parents, actively involved in the daily operation of our preschool. We need you! We value you! We warmly welcome you!

Stepping Stones Preschool is regulated by the Arizona Department Of Health Services, 150 N. 18th Av., Phoenix, AZ, 602-364-2536. Copies of recent inspections are available in the preschool office.

Non-Profit TAX ID NUMBER: 94-2437102

Our Staff

Along with our directors, teachers plan and carry out daily activities as a team. Our teachers have a teaching degree or extensive experience in an experience-oriented program. Our basic concern in hiring teachers is that they are very open to our preschool philosophy and are willing to put in hours to make it happen. All of our teachers attend a back to school training workshop in August. Staff meetings are held twice monthly and all staff members are encouraged to attend numerous training sessions available on our campus and throughout the valley. Ongoing education and training of our staff is vital and advantageous to our program.

We are very proud that many of our staff members have been at Stepping Stones Preschool for more than 12 years. Our teachers are very professional and dedicated, and focus on giving your children a great preschool experience while also working side by side with the parents in the classroom.

OUR STAFF IS SPECIAL AND LOVED BY US ALL!

Preschool Hours

Classes are in sessions Monday through Friday from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. or Monday, Wednesday, Friday, from 12:30-3:00 p.m. For a complete list of classes, days and ages of students, please check our current brochure. We do not have classes on holidays and our school schedule is similar to the Deer Valley School District schedule.

Stepping Stones Preschool admits children of any race, color, gender, religious belief, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and other activities of the school.

Sign In

Please sign your child in daily using full name (no initials). The sign in sheets are located outside your child's classroom. KDO sign in sheets are used for signing your child in and out of KDO and are in the KDO room. Under no circumstances will a child be released to anyone not known to the preschool staff without authorization from a parent or guardian. The person picking up your child will be asked for proper picture identification.

Kid's Day Out (KDO) program

KDO is in session from 8 to 9 a.m. and from 11:30-3:30 p.m. The KDO rate is \$5.00 per hour. Families with more than one child receive a 10% discount. A late fee of \$1.00 per minute will be charged after 3:30 p.m. After 3 late pickups, the charge is \$5 per minute. This will be paid directly to the teacher at the time of pickup.

Afternoon KDO begins on the playground where the children have an opportunity to meet their friends and play. They then eat lunch inside with their friends. **The parents provide lunch.** Our after lunch program is an extension of their day and includes "work time" that allows the child an opportunity to choose an activity from the centers in the classroom and small group activities. The afternoon also includes music, movement and stories. Afternoon snack is provided by the school.

In order to meet state licensing guidelines, the lunch needs to have 100% juice, milk or water.

Lunch Bunch

Full day children bring their own lunch from home. Lunch food follows the same guidelines as KDO above. You will be provided with a tag to put on your child's lunch box. This tag keep their lunches separate from the KDO lunches. Place your child's lunch on the cart in the lobby with the KDO lunches. Their morning teacher takes the children out to the playground to play at 11:30. At 12:00 noon volunteers supervise the lunch time eating and they take them to their afternoon class.

School forms

All school forms must be completed and returned to us by the first day of school. If you move, change telephone numbers, begin a new job or in any way change the information you have given us on these forms, please inform one of the directors. We use this information to reach you in case of an emergency so it is important that we have accurate information at all times.

Learning is experience, everything else is just information"-

Albert Einstein

Discipline

The teacher is the central figure and should handle major discipline problems in the classroom and on the playground. If the aide is near a situation where a child could be hurt or fighting may occur, the aide should intervene and remind the children to express their feelings in a more acceptable manner. They can also redirect the child to a more desirable activity. In any other case, the teacher should be told and will take care of the situation. It is best not to discipline your own child, let their teacher handle the disciplining when at preschool. The teachers use a loving manner when disciplining, knowing this too is a growing process as children learn to make better choices and decisions.

We believe in freedom. We also believe in limits. We strive to help the child understand his/her role in striking a balance between the two.

Health/Illness

Immunization Records or exemption affidavits must be on file in the office.

We want to protect your child and other students. Please do not send your child if he/she has abnormal health symptoms. The most contagious period for the common cold is the first 3 to 5 days. **Keep your child home whenever fever, sore throat, rash, stomach pain, or infestation of the eye, vomiting, diarrhea or runny nose with colored discharge is evident.**

Please report contagious diseases immediately so that parents of other children in the group can be notified. If your child is ill or shows symptoms, you will be asked to remove him/her from school until he/she is healthy. Germs travel very fast in a preschool environment. By keeping your ill child at home, he/she is not spreading the infection to others.

Medications will be given only after a Request for Medication form is on file in the office. All medication must be in original container. Medication requiring refrigeration cannot be administered.

Snacks

Snack time will be used to teach good nutrition, appropriate manners, and to offer a variety of foods to the students. The school will follow the rules set by the State Health Department when determining the menu. The snack menu is posted in the classrooms and by the office. Two food groups are always offered to children during snack time. We make every effort to work with parents whose children have food allergies. Please let us know if your child has a food allergy.

Birthdays

Guidelines for birthday celebrations at Stepping Stones Preschool have been established to help make your child's birthday a very special occasion. The teacher will help your child celebrate by making him/her a birthday crown and the class will be singing "Happy Birthday". As a parent you can help make this day special by enjoying snack time with your child and by bringing a small snack treat for the children and adults in the class.

The County Health Department licensing regulations require all food items be prepared in a state health approved kitchen. Do not prepare something yourself at home. You may prepare something yourself in our Stepping Stones kitchen or bring in something from a grocery store. Food items must be brought in the original, unopened packages from the store.

Please keep in mind the following guidelines concerning birthday celebrations:

1. If you choose to bring food items, please check with the teacher about classroom allergies and special diet considerations. A small treat is acceptable, but please-no suckers or hard candy (for safety reasons). No treat filled goody bags. Keep it simple.
2. To avoid confusion, please confirm the snack/treat with the teacher prior to the birthday.
3. If your child is having a party outside of school, please DO NOT pass out invitations at Stepping Stones unless everyone in the class is to receive one. This will help to avoid hurt feelings by the children as well as parents.

Evaluations

Parent-Teacher conferences are held in February and are a chance for teachers to share with parents what their child has been doing in school. This is also time for parents and teachers to discuss the individual needs and goals of the students. Teachers may be contacted at any time to discuss concerns or successes. The directors are also available to meet with families.

Parents will be asked to evaluate our school program periodically in an effort to better serve our students and families.

Insurance

Stepping Stones Preschool carries its own insurance, which covers each child while attending school. A copy of the policy is available in the office.

Clothing

Parents aiding in the classroom should wear comfortable shoes and appropriate clothing. At Stepping Stones parents frequently dig in the sand with children, get paint splattered on them and spray down tables with bleach water before snack.

Children get messy at preschool. We finger-paint, dig in the garden, and play in water. Our policy is to let children experience a variety of sensory experiences and messy art projects. Children should wear play clothes and parents should expect they will get messy at preschool. In the interests of playground safety, we also strongly recommend shoes with no high heels, open toes or slip on sandals. Stepping Stones Preschool t-shirts for both children and adults are available for sale. Sometimes having a "school shirt" to wear each day to school, keeps stress about mess to a minimum for both parents and adults.

Tuition Tips

Our yearly tuition is broken into nine payments. The families that registered in March receive a bill in the summer to pay one of the payments. That payment is applied towards May's tuition. Beginning in September, tuition is due on the 5th of each month, for the remaining eight payments. A \$15.00 late fee will be charged after the 15th of each month. The following are a few hints to help you:

1. *Please put your child's name and class on each check (Brian-MWF 3s)*
2. *Everyone will be receiving monthly statements, sent home in your child's back packs.*
3. *The statements will show each time you aided extra, your KDO hours, any payments you have made, etc.*
4. *Please double check your statement and let us know of any errors.*

We accept cash, check or credit card. If you have any questions regarding your tuition or need to make payment arrangements, please contact the office.

A discount of 10% will be granted on the tuition of families with a second child enrolled.

Tuition Refunds

Our statement of Policy states, "If the Director is notified two weeks in advance of the child's last day of school, all unused tuition will be refunded. Notification must be in the form of a written withdrawal form available in the preschool office." This is based on the number of class days remaining in the month.

To avoid any confusion, the tuition that is charged for the entire school year is based on the days that the children are in school. (You are not charged for Thanksgiving break, winter break, spring break, other holidays or the days in May after school is out). However, for ease in bookkeeping for both the parents and the preschool, the yearly tuition has been divided into 9 equal payments. If you were to notify the office on Dec. 15, or May 15, you will not receive a refund for the days remaining in the month when school is not in session. Also, if you notify the office mid-November or mid-April that your child will not be back after Dec. 1, or May 1, you will receive a refund for the school days/days that your child misses. You will not receive a full month's tuition refund.

Please contact the office if you have any questions regarding this matter.

Curriculum

At Stepping Stones Preschool, we believe that children grow and develop in predictable sequences, that there are optimal times for particular kinds of learning and that there are teaching methods that are more appropriate at certain times in the development sequence than others.

Using knowledge of the developmental patterns of typical young children in the preschool years, we have made active learning the basis for our educational approach. This learning is initiated by the child rather than “handed down” or “transmitted” by the teachers. Our early childhood curriculum encourages both children and adults to initiate learning experiences. We challenge the children’s emerging abilities and to encourage them to develop and pursue their own interests, talents and goals.

We teach academics through play in the classroom. When planning each day, the teacher takes into account the interests and developmental abilities of the children, the teacher’s own ideas and new ways to extend the child’s interests. Children are given opportunities to set their own goals, to select materials and activities, to handle, explore and work with a variety of interesting materials and are encouraged to talk about what they are doing and what they have done. The adults serve as facilitators, encouraging each child’s efforts and helping them extend or build upon their work by talking with them about what they are doing, by joining in their play and helping them solve problems that arise.

High Scope is the method of teaching in our classrooms. See section on High Scope for more details.

For more information on High Scope, visit www.highscope.org

Newsletter

“Pebbles”, our all school newsletter, is sent home monthly to share what’s happening at our school. Pebbles gives information on upcoming events and also contains articles on child development. It is imperative that the parents read the newsletter and are aware of what is being planned for our students.

Emergency Planning

Each month we will participate in a practice fire drill at preschool. We encourage you to discuss the experience with your child when he/she tells you about it. Proper exit procedures and fire prevention equipment has been installed, inspected and approved.

An emergency, information and immunization card (Blue Card) is required for each child in the preschool. Emergency information and medical procedures are verified and signed by the parents or guardians. These cards must be filled out completely before the child begins school and are kept in the office.

In case of an emergency, 911 will be called and pertinent information given over the telephone. First aid and CPR will be given until a paramedic arrives. If the child needs to be transported to a hospital, the child's Blue Card will accompany him/her. A member of the preschool staff will also accompany the child on his/her trip to receive the necessary treatment.

In case of a full-scale community emergency such as severe weather conditions, it is our policy that the students will move to the church sanctuary and remain there until someone with proper authorization arrives to pick them up.

Toys from Home

We ask that you leave your child's toys at home or in the car. Children become very upset when their special toy is lost in the sand or becomes mixed into an entire classroom of school toys. Toy guns, knives or weapons of any kind are not allowed in the classroom.

Preschool Board

Parents of Stepping Stones Preschool children are invited to join our preschool board. The board meets about once a month, sets policies, and assists the staff in planning special events, filling volunteer positions and coordinating fund-raisers.

Parent Participation

Parents are warmly welcome to be an important part of our program and help in a variety of ways. Classroom parent aides will report to the teacher and sign in **at 8:40 a.m. and work until 11:40 a.m. or later if needed.** Afternoon aides need to arrive **at 12:10 p.m. and work until 3:10 p.m. or later if necessary.** It is important to arrive on time in order to receive any instructions the teacher may have for you. If you have preschool children, bring them with you to the room where you are aiding until their class begins. Children attending the nursery or playroom can be taken there at 8:30 a.m. Please be reliable, your teacher depends on you!!!

All aides must meet the current requirements set by the state. We fingerprint all parents aiding in the classroom, so come to the office to be fingerprinted if you have not already done so. Paperwork concerning aiding (references, TB test results, etc.) must be on file in the office before aiding in the classroom. All parents must also complete parent orientation training. Our training will give you a better understanding of your role in the classroom.

Parents, you have the opportunity to enter the exciting world of a preschooler! By aiding in our classrooms, nursery or kitchen, you have the chance to be a part of a young child's first experience outside of the home. You can also receive tuition credit by aiding days in addition to the required number of days as per your Parent Participation Agreement. Stepping Stones Preschool invites you to become a very important part of your child's preschool. We warmly welcome you!!!

Parent Professionalism

Aides will conduct themselves in a professional manner towards children, parents and staff members. No discussion of the children or staff will take place outside the classroom. The teacher is the authority figure in the classroom and will be the one to communicate with the parents. Any problems that cannot be resolved between the parent and the teacher will be referred to the Director(s). Any concerns or negativity needs to be brought to the Director(s) so a resolution can be reached.

Aide Substitute Procedure

If you are unable to work an aide day you are signed up for, it is your responsibility to find a substitute. A parent participation directory will be made available to you. You must attempt to replace yourself. If you are unable to find a replacement, please call the calendar person listed on the front of the directory that is responsible for that week. If a situation occurs after 8:30 a.m. on the day you are unable to be the aide and you are unable to find a substitute, please call the office at 623-606-4266. **A \$20 penalty will be charged if you fail to attempt to find a substitute, do not contact the calendar person or do not show up to aide.**

Nursery/Playroom

A nursery will be provided for an aide's own child during the time an aide is working at the preschool. Parents are responsible for providing all necessary supplies and equipment for their own children. This includes infant food, formula, bottles, diapers, and wipes. **Please label everything with your child's name.** Children 2 years and developmentally ready will be in the playroom during the time an aide is working at the preschool.

A snack will be provided for the children in the playroom. School age children will be allowed in the playroom during holidays while their parent is aiding at the preschool. If you have a kindergartner, they will be allowed in the playroom. As in the classrooms, if your child is ill, please keep them home.

The nursery is staffed by a Nursery Coordinator, a permanent nursery aide and parent volunteers. The parent volunteers will receive the same aide credit for volunteering in the Nursery or Playroom as they would receive for aiding in the classroom. Parents should sign up for the nursery and playroom using the same procedure as signing up to aide in a regular classroom.

Aide Credit

Each classroom will have an aide credit sheet to be signed by the parents helping in that classroom that day. This is the way we know to give you your aide credit. When aiding, please ask the teacher where her aide sign-in sheet is, and sign it before leaving the classroom that day.

What is High Scope?

Overview of the High Scope approach

A guiding principle of the High Scope curriculum is the belief that young children are capable of making decisions and solving problems about activities that are interesting to them personally. Teachers then use these personal interests as the springboard for teaching the social and academic concepts needed to be successful in this society.

Benefits of the High Scope approach

1. High Scope children become independent, responsible and confident-ready for success in school.
2. High Scope children learn to plan many of their own activities, carry them out and talk with other children and their teacher about what they have done.
3. High Scope children learn through active involvement with people, materials, events and ideas.
4. High Scope children gain knowledge and skills in creative representation, language and literacy, initiative, and social relations, movements, music, classification, seriation, number, space and time.

What will an observer see in a High Scope classroom?

Active learning

You will see children choosing materials on their own, deciding how they want to use the materials and maybe just exploring different ways to use them. You will also hear children talking about what they are doing or what they have just done.

Children are involved in direct, hands-on experiences with people, objects, ideas and events. While teachers share control and initiative with children, they are guided by 58 key experiences that all children need to have as parent of their intellectual, physical, social and emotional development.

Adult-child interaction

You will see adults interacting at the child's physical level. You will see them observing and listening to children, talking with them about what they are doing and becoming a partner in the children's play by following their interests and ideas, using the same materials the children are using and following directions given by the children.

Learning environment

You will see clearly defined areas with simple names that make sense to the children, like "block area", "house area", "book area", and "art area". You will also see a variety of materials in each area, and these materials are labeled so the children can easily find them and return them when they are finished using them.

Classroom furniture and equipment are arranged in several defined interest areas that enable children to find, use and return the materials they need for exploring, inventing and learning about their world.

Daily routine

You will see a schedule of events that is consistent from day to day. Each day follows a similar schedule of events, providing consistency for both children and adults. A daily plan-do-review process is at the core of the High Scope routine and gives children the opportunity to pursue their own interest, make plans, follow through on them and reflect on their experiences with peers and adults.

Assessment

You will see teachers taking brief notes throughout the day on what they see children doing. They will use their observations as an assessment tool that helps them to better understand each child's development. The teachers use this information when meeting with parents during parent teacher conferences, and when planning goals for the children's development.

The High Scope Daily Routine

Each day follows a similar schedule of events, proving consistency for both children and adults. A daily plan-do-review process is at the core of the High Scope routine and gives children the opportunity to pursue their own interests, make plans, follow through on them, and reflect on their experiences with peers and adults.

GREETING TIME – (10 minutes) Greeting time provides a smooth transition from home to school and gives children and adults a chance to share important information for the day.

PLANNING TIME – (10 minutes) Children indicate what they choose to do during work time (typically what they will do first). Adults try to understand children's plans and often try to help them develop problem-solving skills.

WORK TIME – (45 minutes to 1 hour) Children carry out their initial and subsequent plans. Children can work with any of the materials in any of the interest areas. Adults observe children and look for opportunities to enter into children's activities to encourage their thinking, extend their play, and help them develop problem-solving skills.

CLEAN UP - (10 minutes) Children and adults together return materials and equipment to their storage spaces and, when appropriate, put away or find display space for their personal creations. Yes, at preschool, children do clean up!

RECALL TIME – (10 minutes) Recall brings closure to the planning-work time-recall sequence. Children reflect on, talk about and/or show what they have done at work times.

SNACK TIME – (20 minutes) Children and adults share nutritious food and interesting conversation together in a relaxed manner. Sometimes the entire class eats snack together and other times the children are free to come to a snack area (open snack) during work time.

LARGE GROUP TIME – (15 minutes) Children and adults get together to play games, tell and reenact stories, sing songs, do finger plays, dance, play musical instruments, or discuss recent special events. This time is an opportunity for each child to participate in a large group, sharing ideas, and learning from the ideas of others.

SMALL GROUP TIME – (15-20 minutes) Each adult meets with a small group of children to work with materials planned and introduced by the adult. Although the adult chooses and introduces the materials, each child has control over what he or she can do with these materials.

OUTSIDE TIME – (20-30 minutes) Children spend time outside with adults as they explore, climb, dig in the sand and ride bicycles. Children strengthen their large motor skills, explore nature, and develop social skills during outside time.

NAEYC ACCREDITATION



Stepping Stones Preschool is accredited by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs. This is a branch of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Accredited centers have voluntarily undergone a comprehensive process of internal self study, invited external professional reviewers to verify compliance with the Academy's criteria for high quality early childhood programs. Child-staff ratios, staff qualifications, communication with families and educational programming are just a few of the criteria required to meet the accreditation guide lines of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Stepping Stones Preschool meets these criteria with high praise from the professionals reviewing our program. The accreditation is valid for five years at which time the process is repeated. We are proud to have this seal of approval.