



**Masada's Early Learning Center**

Exceptional Student Services Preschool    - Ages 3-4  
Kindergarten                                        - Ages 5-6

Dear Parents,

We are excited to welcome you to Little Masada's Early Learning Center! We see you, the parents, as an integral part of our team.

Staffed with a dedicated group of professionals, our center will provide your child with a warm, caring and safe environment where the vision to unleash the learning power of your student will be fulfilled. This purpose helps to ensure that each child has the opportunity to reach his/her potential. We are an intervention-based program. Our goal is to understand your child's strengths and needs, and address those needs through building on his/her strengths.

Your child's classroom teacher and paraeducators are trained to help your child develop and build on skills through developmentally appropriate activities. Children will participate in a variety of experiential learning and play activities that will promote thinking, language, pre-literacy, gross/fine motor skills, and social skills.

We are an excellent resource center here to support you as parents in your endeavor to educate your child. Having a young child or children is an exciting time in life but can also be stressful and exhausting. If your child has special needs, we are a resource to help your child become developmentally ready to face the challenges of school and daily life. We will do all that we can to learn about your child's individual needs and, if necessary, point you in the right direction for additional help about your child's specific needs.

Children grow up so quickly, and we are here to help you enjoy each stage of their development. We want to partner with you to build on your child's love of learning, and propel them on their journey to becoming a life-long learner. We desire to promote your enjoyment of each stage your child is at, as they grow up so quickly. Thank you for sharing your little one with us. We look forward to an exciting year!

Sincerely,

Masada's Early Learning Center Staff

## **MISSION, VISION, VALUES**

### ***Unleash the Learning Power of Early Learners***

#### **Guiding Principles: Masada has 5 guiding principles**

1. Every child can learn, and it is our responsibility to facilitate a process that identifies his/her individual learning style and ignites the intrinsic motivation needed to empower the student to strive to do his/her personal best.
2. Learning best takes place in a “small school” environment where educators, students, and parents share a common set of values and beliefs that provide a consistent focus.
3. Academic excellence and personal growth can best be achieved through the combined efforts and direct involvement of students, educators, parents, and the community in the learning process.
4. Best practices for delivering instruction are constantly evolving. The staff at Masada Charter School are committed to modeling life-long learning by actively pursuing and implementing more effective means of instruction as those means are identified and proven valid.
5. The quest for academic excellence fosters a lifestyle where students develop the inner resources and individual responsibility needed to live purposeful lives, meet the challenges of today and tomorrow, and contribute positively to family, work and society.

**Masada’s Early Learning Center Vision and Values**---These beliefs are fundamental to our policies, practices, and program design:

- Every child needs to feel valued, respected, and accepted.
- Children need intellectual stimulation and challenge to learn and grow.
- Children construct their own knowledge through play experiences.
- Language and thinking develop together, not separately. All education is language based.
- A literacy rich environment stimulates the progression of language and literacy development.
- Children thrive best in an environment of choice.
- Children are more secure and trusting when clear and consistent boundaries and expectations are implemented.
- There is not a one-size-fits-all formula that is appropriate for each child in each situation. Consequences and rewards are uniquely fitted to specific needs and circumstances.
- Children learn from each other more readily than from adults.
- Learning is most effective in a social setting.
- Developmentally appropriate learning activities are engaging, relevant, and meaningful.
- Broad motor experiences help develop pathways in the brain. All learning is supported by these brain pathways that are formed in early childhood.
- All learning is sensory based.
- The teacher is a facilitator of learning.
- Parent involvement in learning is essential to student success.
- Learning is propelled when school and home work together.

## MASADA'S EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT SERVICES DESCRIPTION

Masada's Early Learning Center is an integrated program where children with differing abilities and disabilities play and learn together in the same classroom. We are set up to serve both special needs preschoolers and kindergarten students ages three and five. Our special needs children may be challenged in one or more of the following areas: Speech Language Impaired (PSL), Hearing Impaired (HI), Vision Impaired (VI) or developmentally delayed which may affect the following: 1) cognitive abilities, 2) motor abilities, 3) sensory abilities, 4) psychosocial skills, 5) language skills and 6) adaptive behavior. A delay of 1.5 standard deviations below the mean on a norm referenced test in two or more areas on that test would provide services under the state category of Moderate Delay (PMD). A delay of more than 3 standard deviations below the mean on a norm referenced test in one or more areas would provide services for Severe Delay (PSD). Our typically-developing children come from the school community.

We will enroll a limited number of peer model preschoolers in the same age range. They are screened prior to participating in the program. The typically-developing preschoolers pay tuition to attend our program.

Masada's Early Learning Center schedule:

1. Preschool: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday (a.m. session) 9:00am-12:00pm
2. Kindergarten: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday (p.m. session) 12:00pm-4:00pm
3. Monday AM & Friday (no students) - Staff collaboration, planning, and training. There are some exceptions to this schedule. Keep informed of our calendar which is regularly updated on our webpage at [www.masadaschool.org](http://www.masadaschool.org).

During the day, the children participate in a rich variety of activities, during which they experience many opportunities for learning. Each day, the child may participate in circle time, small group activities, independent work time, snack time, walk, and movement activities. The children are given opportunities to make choices about activities and then given a chance to talk about their activity choices. Throughout the year, many concepts are presented through play, songs, literature, finger plays and other sensory related activities.

In the area of guidance and discipline, our ultimate goal is that each child develops self-management and appropriate ways of solving difficulties. Within the classroom setting, we work to set clear, consistent, and fair limits. We listen to the children and help them find ways of resolving their conflicts. We regard mistakes as an opportunity to learn. As part of this learning process, we always look for ways to redirect children to appropriate activities and help them make alternative choices. In some instances, a child may be removed from a situation for a short period of time for a time out. The child is then given the opportunity to rejoin the group and appropriate behavior is modeled and encouraged. At all times, our emphasis is on using positive guidance and treating all children with dignity and respect.

We use a team approach to working with the children. Different school personnel may also participate in our program throughout the year, such as Speech-Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, Vision and Hearing Specialist, etc. The most important participants in the Early Learning Center continue to be the children and their families that we are here to serve!

## **MASADA'S EARLY LEARNING CENTER CURRICULUM**

### **Parent Participation in the Center**

Parent participation in our center is very important. We believe that parent involvement is critical in the success of our students and our program. Our learning center is a space where parents are welcome to come in and participate in the learning activities with their children and spend the day at the center. We have an open-door policy; parents are always welcome to come into the center and spend the day with their child and talk to the teacher at any time. On the specific days they are invited, parents are expected to come or make arrangements to reschedule. When you enroll a student, you can expect to work out specific days that will work for you to spend in our center with your child.

### **THEME BASED**

The curriculum is taught through a thematic approach. A theme-based approach allows content to be taught in a developmental way. "Play is really the work of childhood." (Fred Rogers). Play (structured and unstructured) is the primary means of encouraging skill development in young children. The children are given opportunities to actively manipulate materials and the physical environment and thus gain new skills by working together and interacting with adults. Each child develops or learns at his or her own rate and new skills are acquired when the child is developmentally ready.

Developmentally appropriate practice as set out by the National Association for Education of Young Children is to provide a child with a balance of child directed and teacher-directed activities.

The program combines music, movement, art, drama, large muscle and small muscle games and activities, language arts and concept development. Opportunities for social interaction provide experiences in which children learn to share, to respect the rights of others, to understand themselves and how they positively affect their environment, and to build on their basic skills in a literacy and numeracy rich environment. Indeed, all modes of learning are incorporated.

### **ONGOING PROGRESS MONITORING ASSESSMENTS**

Masada's Early Learning Center uses the Teaching Strategies GOLD for ongoing progress monitoring assessment for all children in all areas of development. We also use the DIBELS Reading Screening Tool for kindergarten students to assess reading readiness. Results are reported to the Arizona Department of Education as part of the Office of Special Education Program (OSEP) requirements to report early childhood outcomes. The information is used to help drive instruction that meets the individual needs of each child whether it's a child with special needs or a typically developing child. Children are also taught and encouraged to self-assess through reflective practices.

Therapeutic intervention is provided for children found eligible by related services personnel. If your child is found eligible for services by the Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET), which includes you, the parent, as a part of the team, services by a therapist and/or specialist would be provided. Most services occur within the context of the classroom environment, however, there are times when more individualized therapy may assist your child in meeting goals and generalizing skills to the classroom.

### **DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES/POLICY**

We believe children have a natural desire to learn and succeed. The staff believes that it is the teacher's responsibility to create a positive learning environment where respect prevails by teaching, modeling, and practicing desirable behaviors. Masada's staff understands that children make mistakes just as adults do and unintentionally break rules as they get involved in working with others. Effective discipline begins with prevention. Our learning center's prevention strategies include the following: demonstrate appropriate coping skills, prepare a safe and age-appropriate environment, schedule events with the children's needs in mind, allow think time & support individual problem solving, and provide clear and consistent expectations.

# Daily Schedule

(Example)

## AM CLASS: PRESCHOOL (9AM to 12PM)

Arrival-Wash Hands  
Open Air In Time  
Center Choices  
Clean up  
Walk  
Snack  
Circle Time  
Free Choice Centers  
Clean up signal  
Quiet Circle and Activities  
Departure

## PM CLASS: KINDERGARTEN (1PM to 4PM)

Arrival-Wash Hands  
Literacy Centers  
Math Meeting  
Structured PE  
Clean up  
Recess & Snack  
Open Air In Time  
Positive Action  
Reading/Writing Instruction  
Free Choice Centers  
Math  
Clean up Signal  
Reflection  
Ticket out the door

## Learning Centers

Speech & Language, Occupational Therapy, (as needed) and Physical Therapy

Reading Center	Gross Motor	Circle Group Time
Discussions	Movement	Theme Concepts
Listening Activities	Exercise	Rhythm
Story Reading	Body Awareness	Exercise
Dramatization of Stories	Balance	Poetry
Poetry	Tone	Brain Dance
Language	Language	Language
Comprehension	Rhythm	Music
Thinking	Synchronized Movement	Social Thinking
		Shared Reading
		Positive Action

Art & Writing	Construction	Dramatic Play Center
Creativity	Building	Pretend Play
Painting	Gross Motor	Cooperative Play
Color	Pretend Play	Construction
Cutting	Sand & Water table	Dress-up
Student Share	Cooperative Play	Language
Pasting		Music
Language		

Science & Math Discovery	Language Center	Writing
Hands on Activities	Language	Student Share
Language	Vocabulary	Handwriting
Thinking & Problem Solving	Categories	Motor Work
Sorting	Word Structure	Writing Process
Observing	Sentence Structure	Language
Experimenting	Oral Aerobics	Journaling
Counting	Sounds	Read-Think-Write
Questioning	Fluency	Publishing
Fine Motor		
Vocabulary		

## KEEPING PARENT COMMUNICATION OPEN

The Learning Center staff will:

- Actively communicate through newsletters, calendars, & other platforms.
- Send monthly snack/donation requests for the hands-on snack program.
- Call often as needed. (If you don't hear from us---it's because all is well.)
- Converse with you informally when you pick up or drop off your child.
- Provide trimester progress reports.
- Schedule formal SEP Conferences where students learn to reflect on and talk about their learning.
- Schedule 'immersion days' for you to come in and participate in specific learning opportunities.
- Maintain an open-door policy and encourage parents to come anytime! Please don't worry about interrupting. Your child will be distracted by your presence or may cry a little when you leave, but your visits communicate interest and appreciation.

### Parents can:

- Volunteer your time to assist with learning activities.
- Attend 'immersion days', which we will schedule at your convenience.
- Come in as often as possible to observe and play.
- Call or text us whenever you have a question or concern.
- Send notes to teachers about your child's special accomplishments at home, or particular needs.
- Support the snack program with donations and/or whole food contributions.
- Schedule a time to share something special or interesting with all the children. (animal, pet, insect, big pumpkin, funny shaped potato, anything!) Call us ahead of time.
- Attend parent meetings.
- Read the newsletters and support us by trying strategies and activities at home.
- **Please send a note or call if there is a change in plans (or persons!) for picking up your child. We cannot release your child to any person not authorized by you.**
  - **When baby sitters will be picking up children or bringing them to school-please provide us with names and their phone numbers!**

### GETTING READY FOR LEARNING: TIPS FOR PARENTS

1. Help your child be excited about going to school. Talk often about how much fun it will be to go to school and talk about activities your child will do there. This will help your child want to make the transition.
2. Tell your child often how proud you are that he/she is growing up, how pleased you are that he/she is doing so many things by himself/herself, and how well you know they will do in the school. This will help your child feel confident about handling the new experiences ahead.
3. Place your child in situations where he/she needs to follow directions-one step at first, then two, then three. Teach your child to rehearse directions in order to remember them.
4. Help your child learn self-care skills, which are age appropriate, such as putting away toys, hand washing, independent toileting, buttoning, zipping, and shoe tying. Teach your child to recognize his/her own name and the basic colors. Busy teachers value these skills.
5. Put your child in some situations where he cannot do the expected task and must ask for help. If he/she doesn't know how to ask for help, demonstrate polite asking and then wait for the child to imitate you before assisting.
6. Read books with your child every day. Talk together about the pictures and the story. If your child doesn't like to sit still for long, read for a brief time each day, even if the book is short. Make it a happy time. You will then notice how your child's attention span increases.
7. **Manage your child's screentime with a preference for educational games.** Recent research makes connections between early screen time and sensory processing difficulties. If your child watches TV, watch it together making sure to talk about what you are seeing. Prioritize educational shows like "Discovery Channel, Mr. Rogers, and Nature Channel." If you allow your child to watch cartoons, watch with him/her. Ask your child to tell you what happened in the cartoon story. Help the child to reconstruct the sequence of events.



8. Let your child help you sort the laundry, set the table, cook, bake, put away groceries, and organize his/her books and toys. All of these are classification tasks, related to school skills.
9. Teach the child to do simple tasks at home. Most young children can learn to hang up their coats and put things away. Children can learn to help pick up their toys, empty small trashcans, and/or wipe doorknobs. Children can keep a "school box" at home, where he/she puts crayons, scissors, pencil, and eraser. Let your child help you vacuum, sweep, dust, and wash the sink and bathtub. These very practical jobs also develop physical coordination.
10. Be sure your child has lots of opportunities to run, jump, climb, and play outside. **These motor skills wire the brain for learning.** Children who have learned to control their own bodies in space are usually more confident in new situations and more capable of managing school motor tasks.
11. Any time you teach your child to do a new task, break it into little parts and teach each part (for example, putting on shoes, cleaning the bedroom, and opening a milk carton). Reward with praise each part of the task the child does successfully. Very few people praise a child too much; most of us praise too little. Encourage independence by allowing them to practice doing appropriate tasks by themselves.
12. When you go places with your child, talk-a-bout what you are seeing. Point out characteristics (color, size, shape) and names of objects you view. Try to be conversational, as you would with an adult, rather than constantly quizzing your child ("oh, look at the red house," rather than "what color is this house?" "I like the BIG pumpkin best-which one do you like?" rather than "show me the big one").
13. When you get home from a trip to the store, church, or a party, ask your child to tell another family member what you did. If the child has difficulty retelling the event, help and support so that the story can be told. This skill is called recasting. It is closely related to reading comprehension.
14. **Point** out letters and words and numbers in the world around your child (street signs, billboards, house numbers, names of family members on letters, and the numbers of hymns in the songbook at church). This will provide a foundation for learning symbols in reading.
15. Frequently **count** objects, touching them as you say the numbers. This will help your child realize that numbers represent sets of things. Allow your child to earn small amounts of money they can keep in a piggy bank and let them count it often. Money teaches nearly all of the basic number sense concepts.
16. **Talk** often about interesting jobs your child might have when he/she grows up-not just about making lots of money at a job. Be sure your child knows that most jobs require working hard and doing well in school. Talk about the value of work and industry. Recognize their work contributions to the family.
17. **Teach** your child to appreciate that every person is unique and special; that human differences are a wonderful part of our world and not a threat; and that all people need to help others as well as be helped by others in order to live happily.
18. **Enjoy** time you spend with your child. Positive and trusting attitudes about people and the world that your child learns now will remain with him/her throughout life.



## **Masada's Positive Behavior Guidance Policies and Practices**

*We Believe positive behavior guidance leads a child toward self-control and respect for self and for others.*

Components include:

Relationship-building

Prevention

Clear and high expectations

Choices

Natural, timely, and appropriate consequences

Community-Building.

Relationships are powerful, but take time to establish. Relationship-building is about establishing trust and mutual regard and respect. Rewards don't motivate children, relationships do. An emotionally safe environment is as important as a physically safe environment.

Prevention of many discipline problems can be done simply by being aware of children's physical and emotional needs, and eliminating things or events in the environment that cause problems.

Making expectations clear includes: defining boundaries, establishing simple rules, practicing appropriate behaviors, reviewing rules and the social reasons for rules, and modeling the expected behaviors. High expectations communicate adult's faith that children are capable.

Providing choices is powerful in conveying to a child's mind that he has the power to control himself. Children need plenty of practice making choices and experiencing the natural consequences (positive and negative). Choice gives children opportunities to feel powerful, which is critical to their development.

Consequence is as much about catching children being 'good' as anything. Consequence gives a child feedback about his behavior, helping him to understand the acceptability of the behavior. Consequences are only effective if they are timely and are easily 'connected' to the behavior in the child's mind. Consequences should be reasonable and immediate.

Community-building is about developing social awareness, acceptance of differences, development of empathy for others and responsibility for self. In community-building, a child learns the joy of helping, of being a contributing member of a group. Confidence and respect for self is inherent.

**We will:**

- Create an environment that is child-friendly and safe, with consistent expectations.
- Establish simple rules and routines and provide children with opportunities to practice them.
- Model desired social behaviors: greetings, helpfulness, empathy, apologies for mistakes, etc.
- Raise awareness of children's emotional states and physical needs.
- Prevent misbehavior that is a result of under-stimulated intellect.

- Discuss commonalities and differences, concepts of 'together-ness', promote friendship-building through activities.
- Redirect children toward acceptable choices.
- Provide choices as often as possible; choice of response, choice of activities, etc. Avoid presenting a choice when it is not available. Help children recognize that other individuals also have choices.
- Respect children's choices.
- State requests in a positive, respectful, and firm manner. Expect compliance.
- Reinforce positive behaviors immediately: specific praise, social rewards paired with tangible rewards, privileges, social rewards.
- Implement immediate and appropriate consequences for unacceptable behaviors.
- Implement intervention plans for individual children when behaviors significantly interfere with learning. Parents are typically informed of these plans and sometimes involved.

**We do not:**

- Disregard a child's feelings, or assume that one strategy is appropriate for all.
- State requests repetitively to the point of nagging, or argue and threaten.
- Punish the entire group for the misbehavior of one or two.
- Avoid behavior guidance strategies because we are unsure of parent reaction.

**CHILD FIND SCREENING**

**What is Child Find?**

It's a component of the IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) that requires states to *locate*, *identify*, and *evaluate* all children with developmental delays or disabilities, aged birth through 21, who may need early intervention or special education services.

**Who is responsible for Child Find activities?**

Public School Districts and the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) are responsible for 'finding' eligible children.

**How is Child Find accomplished in our community?**

For infants and toddlers ages birth to 2 ½ years, Child Find opportunities are readily available. Masada's Early Learning Center conducts Child Find clinics in May of each year, as advertised on our webpage and newsletters. The Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) and local districts conduct regular child find clinics. Arizona has an intergovernmental agreement with Utah for Root for Kids of St. George to serve the families of Colorado City, Cane Beds, and surrounding areas. If families have concerns about a child's development, they can contact either Masada, Cottonwood Preschool, AzEIP or Root for Kids directly at any time. Families may also contact our office for information about early intervention services available through Root for Kids. Professionals will meet with parents at the family's home or at the Root for Kids office located at Cottonwood Elementary.

**Children age 3 to 5 years:** Masada conducts an annual screening at the end of May each year. We must have a completed enrollment form to schedule students for screening. Screenings includes vision and hearing as well speech/language, cognition, motor, social/emotional, and self-help development. When screening results indicate potential delays, a comprehensive developmental assessment is recommended for determining the child's needs and establishing eligibility for services. If parents have a concern about their preschooler's development outside of this screening, they are encouraged to call our office.

For **school-age children, age six through 21 years**, parents can contact Masada's main office or the Special Education office directly to enquire about services or refer a student. Within 45 days of entry into school, the Special Education office screens every kindergarten student and every newly enrolled student. The screening focuses on learning behaviors and academics and is done through a questionnaire completed by classroom teachers. Vision and hearing screenings are done by the school nurse. Referrals are made as appropriate.

AzEIPEarlyInterventionProgram	888-439-5609 or 602-532-9960	<a href="http://www.azdes.gov/azeip">www.azdes.gov/azeip</a>
Root for Kids	435-215-8232	<a href="mailto:hcooper@rootforkids.org">hcooper@rootforkids.org</a>
Cottonwood Elementary	928-875-9000 or 928-875-9001	<a href="http://www.elcap.us">www.elcap.us</a>

#### **ELIGIBILITY FOR PRESCHOOL EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT SERVICES CRITERIA**

**Children who are identified as having a disability or developmental delay receive special education services free of charge. It must be determined that these children are eligible for services through a formal evaluation process. They must meet eligibility criteria established by the Arizona Department of Education. Eligibility criteria and categories are as follows:**

**Moderately Delayed (PMD):** Formal assessment procedures determined that compared to the child's chronological age mates there is a moderate delay (performance on a standardized norm-referenced test measures 1.5 to 3.0 standard deviations below the mean) in two or more of the following areas:

- (a) cognitive development
- (b) physical development
- (c) communication development
- (d) social/emotional development
- (e) adaptive development

**Severely Delayed (PSD):** Formal assessment procedures determined that compared to other children in the same age group as your child, there is a severe delay (performance on a standardized norm-referenced test measure more than 3.0 standard deviations below the mean) in one or more of the following areas.

- (a) cognitive development
- (b) physical development
- (c) communication development
- (d) social/emotional development
- (e) adaptive development

**Speech-Language Impairment (PSL):** Language assessment has determined the child is developing significantly below what is typical for his/her age (1.5 standard deviations below the mean on a norm-referenced language test) or whose speech, out of context, is unintelligible to a listener who is unfamiliar with the child and the child is not eligible for services under another preschool category.

**Visual Impairment (VI):** There must be documentation by an appropriate specialist that the visual impairment effects the child's learning and development.

**Hearing Impairment (HI):** There must be documentation by an appropriate specialist that the hearing impairment effects the child's learning and development.

**Individual Education Programs (IEP's)** are developed for children who are eligible for preschool special education services. The Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team develops the IEP. The IEP is reviewed by the IEP Team, which again includes the parent as an integral part of the team.

### **CONTINUUM OF SERVICES**

Each child with a disability has a right to a free and appropriate public education. The Individual Education Program (IEP) team determines what level of service the child needs in order to meet their goals. There are different levels of service and service models that the IEP team may consider.

**Itinerant** services consist of the speech language therapist working with the child, providing therapy several times a week.

**Self-Contained Preschool Special Education Classroom** consists of an Early Childhood Special Education Teacher and related service providers working with the parent and child to develop a therapeutic, developmental and/or pre-academic program that meets the child's needs. Related service personnel work with the child in the context of a preschool classroom or individualized sessions based on the child's needs.

**Dismissal** from services is a goal for many children. Sometimes a dismissal occurs before the transition to kindergarten. Determination of dismissal can be based upon:

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

If dismissal is indicated, the child may complete the semester or continue until a more appropriate transition date is determined by the team. Some students may continue in the classroom as tuition students.

## REGISTRATION/ ENROLLMENT

All preschoolers preparing to attend Masada's Early Learning Center must complete a registration packet before entrance to the program.

1. Registration Packet
2. Proof of age and Identity \*required within 30 days  
A copy of **one** of the following:
  - Certified birth certificate
  - Baptism record
  - A social security card or social security application with registering child's name
  - A notarized affidavit explaining the lack of birth certificate
3. Documented Immunization Record or Signed Exemption
4. Proof of Residency (i.e.: utility bill, bank statement-as specified on acceptable residency documentation)

**Enrollment Priorities:** Masada's Early Learning Center has a limited number of spaces. A spot in the classroom will be granted according to these priorities:

- 1) Children with disabilities of staff who work at Masada or Board Members.
- 2) Children with disabilities who have siblings currently enrolled in Masada.
- 3) Any remaining slots will be filled by lottery for children with disabilities.

We will enroll a limited number of peer models in our program. Parents will pay tuition to enroll students as role models as the state does not fund the school for these students. Peer model students will be enrolled according to these priorities:

- 1) Children of teachers who work at Masada or Board Members.
- 2) Children who have siblings currently enrolled in Masada.
- 3) Any remaining slots will be filled by lottery from all remaining candidates.

## TUITION STUDENTS

Typically developing children are screened and chosen for placement in the program based on their ability to be strong language and behavior models for our special needs students. There are a limited number of spaces available and children must be 3 before September 1<sup>st</sup>. If a child is placed in the program and difficulties are noted in the classroom, your child may be referred back to the evaluation team. Tuition fees must be paid for students to maintain enrollment.

**FEES: Peer model tuition fees** are \$350/month, (or \$3000/year) and must be paid by the first day of the school year (or month in a payment plan). Payment plans can be arranged for a small fee.

## Un-Enrollment

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

- The evaluation team determines that the child is no longer eligible for special education. (A Review of Existing Data, Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team Report and Individual Education Plan Team meeting must occur for this to happen.
- The child does not attend for 10 consecutive days without notice from the parent as to the reason for absence.
- The parent withdraws the child from the school by completing the necessary paperwork.
- Peer model students when tuition is unpaid.

We ask that parents of our tuition students please give a two-week notice if they will be leaving the program. This will enable us to allow another child to attend as soon as an opening occurs.

## ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance at school and being prompt for class is both appreciated and expected. If it is necessary for a child to be kept home, please call and report his/her absence to **928-875-2525 or text 435-212-0595**. Masada's Early Learning Center follows its own special calendar. This calendar is posted on the school website: [www.masadaschool.org](http://www.masadaschool.org).

## ARRIVAL/ DISMISSAL POLICY

**It is very important that parents/caregivers accompany the child** to the classroom when they arrive at school and not leave the child unless a staff member is present to supervise. **Please sign-in your preschool child at the front desk**. Children should be dropped off at school no earlier than five (5) minutes prior to the start of their session, and picked up promptly when the session is over. Early arrival and late pick-up of your children leave teachers without adequate preparation and lunchtime. Please be considerate and time your arrivals and pick-ups properly.

At dismissal teachers will excuse children to be released to parents. Children will only be released to parents or authorized adults. **Please sign-out your preschool child at the front desk**. Please be prompt, as children tend to become upset, restless and/or afraid if you are late. If an emergency arises, call the 928-875-2525 so that we may reassure your child. We must have either a written note or in-person request to:

- Dismiss your child early.
- Release your child to a babysitter, car pool, family member or friend other than specified at the beginning of school.
- You must sign your child in and out at the front desk for late arrival or early dismissal.

## SNACKS

Eating is a sensory experience. Healthy eating habits are connected to sensory and motor development. Many children experience sensory challenges that develop into rigid eating habits and ultimately result in nutritional deficits over time. Foods need to be introduced intentionally and in a positive environment encouraging handling and exploration with food. We believe children will develop healthy eating behaviors when they are exposed to and help prepare healthy foods. Masada's Early Learning Center designs the snack program to integrate with the learning centers your child participates in. We work to engage the participation of local growers and businesses in our snack program. Children join in discovery learning projects around foods they eat and in the preparation of them. The snack center provides a variety of choices and is a hands-on activity where children engage in the design and preparation of their food encouraging their choice and willingness to try new things. A food allergies form must be completed to notify staff of any allergies your child has and these foods will be avoided. **(FYI-Research shows that screen time (of any kind) before the age of 2 years causes sensory challenges in children that look similar to autism and can have an impact on eating behaviors.)**

### **Snack donations**

Masada's integration of high-quality snacks into a hands-on experience for kids is expensive. We are committed to it because of the benefits kids receive and the effects a good diet has on student health and learning. We need your help in supplying the funds needed for nutritional foods. State nutrition programs provide processed foods high in sugars and we choose not to participate in them. Our unique approach to providing/teaching snack requires funding. We DO NOT ask you to send snack. Rather, we ask for donations to fund the acquisition of foods for our snack centers. This donation is not required for enrollment. Snack donations can be made at any time during the year. Donations can be sent via cash app to \$Masadaschool or in the form of cash/check delivered to the office.

**Snacks are simple, whole foods.**

**Examples:**

**Drinks:** Milk, herb tea, apple or orange juice, other 'no-sugar-added' fruit juices

**Fruit:** Apples, Bananas, Oranges, Grapes, Melons, Berries, Pineapple and/or other fruits.  
Applesauce, Dried fruits, Raisins

**Carbs:** Soda crackers, Club crackers, Fish crackers, Pretzels, Chips, Graham crackers, Granola bars,  
Toasted breads, Bagels, Popcorn, Tater tots with sauce

**Protein:** String cheese, Yogurt, Cottage cheese, Lunch meats, Cheese slices, Chicken nuggets, nuts

**Veggies:** Carrots, Celery sticks, Cucumbers, Sweet red bell pepper, Tomatoes, Broccoli & Cauliflower

**COATS and BACKPACKS**

If your child brings a coat or backpack to school, please make sure it is clearly marked with his/her name on it. Coats, jackets, and hats for outdoor activities during cold weather are necessary. Please mark these items for ease of identification and recovery.

**UNIFORM DRESS**

Masada maintains a uniform dress standard for ALL students. The attire and grooming of all students must be neat, clean, and safe. **Our preschool students will wear Black bottoms and long-sleeved tops of any color. Parents may purchase any brand from any source as long as they conform to the standard.**

Dresses, skirts, blouses, jumpers, shirts, pants, and trousers must be modest and not revealing.

If girls wear a skirt/jumper they must wear leggings, pantaloons or tights underneath their skirts that extend below the knee.

All pants worn by boys or girls must be long pants.

Shirts and blouses must have long sleeves.

Necklines cannot be revealing, even when the wearer bends over.

Midriff must be covered at all times including when arms are raised above the head or when bent over.

Parents are strongly urged to dress little girls in clothing that preserves modesty as they tumble, climb, and play on the floor or jungle gyms. Clothing should be of good condition, but appropriate for 'messy' play and learning. Paint marketed as "washable" will stain some fabrics.

**Kindergarten is the first year of school in our formal program. Kindergarten students are expected to wear the Masada elementary uniform. These items are available through Basic American and French Toast.**

Any color of shoe is acceptable. Shoes must be sturdy and fitting for support and protection of feet during motor learning activities: jumping, kicking, running, and balancing. Please, NO TIE SHOES, DRESS SHOES, SUNDAY SHOES or HIGH TOPS. Our students go in and out of the building all through the day, they need to have shoes that they can put on and take off independently as needed for activities. **No slipper required for kindergarten or preschool.**

**SEP (Student Education Plan)**

SEP Conferences are important meetings between teachers, parents, and students. Our students are taught to reflect on their learning and to share their thinking with you in these meetings. SEP's are held in October, February, and May. We ask that you prioritize time to meet your scheduled SEP conference.



## **MEDICAL CONDITIONS and ADMINISTERING MEDICATION**

Parents or guardians of any child enrolled must notify Masada's school nurse of any medical conditions requiring special attention or consideration, including any known allergies (including food allergies). If it is determined that children are suffering with an infectious disease, they will be sent home (parents will be called).

A medication consent form will need to be completed by the child's parent/guardian for any child requiring the administration of any medication during the preschool day. The teachers will administer medicine. Medicine must be in the original container and clearly labeled. Students are not allowed to carry medication or administer to themselves.

## **EMERGENCY FIRST-AID and ILLNESS**

Teachers receive emergency first aid training. The school nurse is consulted with student illnesses. If it is necessary for the child to leave school, the parent is contacted. ***Please cooperate by picking up your child promptly.*** We will not call unless your child needs to be at home. For this reason, it is of vital importance to keep your child's emergency card up to date, which includes the following.

- Current home address and telephone number.
- Place of employment and phone number of both parents/guardians.
- Name of 2 people who are responsible for the child in the event parents cannot be located immediately if an emergency occurs.

Children who are ill ***MUST*** be kept home from school. ***Children with fever, diarrhea or vomiting in the previous 24-hour period must be kept home from school.*** If your child will be out sick, please call the school office to inform the teacher. (Sorry, no deductions are made in fees for tuition children).

Parents will be notified by letter if there is an outbreak of any communicable disease.

## **GUIDELINES FOR KEEPING OUR SCHOOL HEALTHY**

Check your students for these signs of illness:

- Frequent Coughing, with other signs of illness
- Fever or chills
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Frequent sneezing
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Breathing trouble, sinus congestion
- Unusual spots or rashes; (ringworm, scabies, impetigo)
- Red, irritated, draining eye(s) which might be conjunctivitis (pink eye)

To limit the spread of germs and prevent infection:

- Teach your children to wash their hands frequently with soap and water.
- Teach your children to cover their coughs and sneezes with tissue and be sure to model that behavior.

- Teach your children to stay away from others if they are sick.

Please notify us if your student is absent with illness.

## IMMUNIZATIONS

Before enrolling into Masada's Early Learning Center ***all children must be up-to-date*** with their immunizations or parents must sign an exemption form. ***A copy of their immunization record must be provided.***

Vaccinations may be obtained free of charge through Mohave County Health Department. Please contact Diedre Meldrum for the locations and times nearest to your home. If you have any questions concerning immunizations, you may call your child's school nurse. Our school nurse also has further information on where free immunizations are available; Nurse Nada 435-467-2010.

## SAFETY DRILLS

Unannounced evacuation/fire drills will be conducted at least once every 30 days as required by law. Emergency evacuation plans are posted in each classroom.

## The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level.

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school within 45 days of a request made to the school administrator. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records without being given copies. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Parents or eligible students have the right to request in writing that a school correct records that they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent to release any information from a student's education record.

However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions:

- School officials\* with legitimate educational interest\*\*;
- Other schools to which a student is seeking to enroll;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

- Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, sports participation (including height and weight of athletes) and dates of attendance unless notified by the parents or eligible student that the school is not to disclose the information without consent.
- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a federal law that protects the rights of students with disabilities. In addition to standard school records, for children with disabilities education records could include evaluation and testing materials, medical and health information, Individualized Education Programs and related notices and consents, progress reports, materials related to disciplinary actions, and mediation agreements. Such information is gathered from a number of sources, including the student's parents and staff of the school of attendance. Also, with parental permission, information may be gathered from additional pertinent sources, such as doctors and other health care providers. This information is collected to assure the child is identified, evaluated, and provided a Free Appropriate Public Education in accordance with state and federal special education laws.
- Each agency participating under Part B of IDEA must assure that, at all stages of gathering, storing, retaining and disclosing education records to third parties, it complies with the federal confidentiality laws. In addition, the destruction of any education records of a child with a disability must be in accordance with IDEA regulatory requirements.

\*A school official is a person employed or contracted by the school to serve as an administrator, supervisor, teacher, or support staff member (including health staff, law enforcement personnel, attorney, auditor, or other similar roles); a person serving on the school board; or a parent or student serving on an official committee or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

\*\*A legitimate educational interest means the review of records is necessary to fulfill a professional responsibility for the school.

For additional information or to file a complaint, you may call the federal government at (202) 260-3887 (voice) or 1- 800-877-8339 (TDD) OR the Arizona Department of Education (ADE/ESS) at (602) 542-4013.

Or you may contact:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue  
SW Washington, D.C. 20202-5901

Arizona Department of Education  
Exceptional Student Services  
1535 W. Jefferson, BIN24  
Phoenix, AZ 85007