



Sunset Mesa School
Educating Our Future Since 1948

Questions to Ask About Preschool

1. How do I know if this school is a match for my child and my family?

You need to know your child, know yourself, and know the school. There are some key facts about Sunset Mesa that can help you decide your answer to this question. Two of the traditional values instilled at Sunset Mesa are respect and cooperating with friends. These combine to create an enjoyable and orderly learning environment. In the preschool years, we work in earnest to help children achieve these goals.

At Sunset Mesa, healthy early childhood development is important. Academics are also important. We blend the two so that learning happens through activities that are engaging, intentional, and developmentally appropriate. We will make the most of each day with your child.

Families also must be willing to invest their time in order to maximize the opportunities at Sunset Mesa. We partner with our families in the way we share information and ask for participation in the goals set for the children. We ask families to help the children become independent, develop positive behavior, and support our activities by helping with occasional projects, volunteering for special events, and by participating in meetings and conferences

2. What is the maximum class size for each grade level? This is different from “student: faculty ratios” that may include all school staff.

Preschool	16 with one teacher and one assistant
Kindergarten	16 with one teacher and a shared assistant
Prefirst	10
Grade 1	16
Grade 2	18
Grades 3, 4, and 5	20

3. What is the school’s expectation for students’ behavior and how is discipline implemented?

Sunset Mesa makes every effort to maintain a standard of respect, kindness, morality, and honesty. The method we use to accomplish these goals is to create a positive and consistent atmosphere where the educators foster respect between adults, classmates, and the environment. The Sunset Mesa discipline philosophy encourages self-respect, self-discipline, cooperation, good behavior, and development of problem-solving skills.

All staff members who work directly with children are required to complete the assigned reading and attend trainings on Positive Discipline for Preschoolers (Nelsen, 2007).

4. How do I know my child will be physically and emotionally safe?

Adults model and teach that people should respect and care for one another. Administrators and faculty devote significant time and energy to developing a sense of community and friendship among students; as a result, students can feel physically and emotionally safe among their peers.

The preschool campus has a single building with a walled playground and entry points which are only unlocked at dismissal and arrival times. During school hours, visitors are screened before allowed into the building.

Students are dismissed directly from a teacher to a parent or someone authorized by a parent.

Children are always supervised.

Staff is professionally trained to respond to a variety of emergency situations.

5. What sets your school's use of curriculum apart from that of other schools?

Early Childhood teachers are degreed. Montessori teachers are AMS certified. Whether Early Childhood or Montessori, each student will receive the same opportunities for learning and growth in language arts, math, STEM, physical education, music, fine motor, and much more.

High quality curriculum is developed to provide foundational skills, as well as, opportunities for teachers to challenge students. The school makes a significant investment in curriculum training for teachers to enhance their skills.

Teachers and administrators work diligently to have a continuity of curricular implementation from pre-school through fifth grade.

Teachers provide classroom environments and experiences that recognize and utilize each child's unique learning style through the methods of differentiated instruction. All staff have been trained using Carol Tomlinson's *Practice of Differentiated Instruction*.

6. How is the curriculum enriched?

Play and exercise are key to great education and childhood is not sacrificed. Our children have plenty of recess time on our beautiful, well-equipped playground.

Children receive Spanish, Music, and Get Fit throughout the week.

STEM is an area of focus where teachers provide multiple cross-curricular opportunities for learning and emphasize higher-level thinking skills. The Garden of Tomorrow becomes the backdrop for many STEM activities as well as developing a love of nature.

7. How can families be involved and informed?

We have an open-door policy and welcome your questions and thoughts. Outside each classroom, we post daily events and curriculum goals for the classroom. Additionally, teachers and staff send monthly newsletters and notifications.

The website is a wealth of information and the school offices email announcements on a regular basis.

Parents can join the Sunset Mesa Parent Association, an organization designed by parents to support the school in providing their children with a quality education along with helping to foster a community network for the school's families.

Parents can volunteer in classrooms for special projects, community events, and to make special presentations in their fields of expertise.

8. How does the school assess students?

On a daily basis, teachers use an array of standard-based assessment techniques that give them a broad understanding of each child's strengths, challenges, and interests. The Director meets regularly with the teachers to review student assessments and determine best strategies as needed.

Parents receive report cards at the end of each trimester, attend two teacher conferences, and are encouraged to communicate regularly with the teacher. Additional conferences occur on occasion and the Director will typically attend those.

9. How can I be confident that my child will be ready for Kindergarten?

The preschool director and teachers work closely with the elementary principal and kindergarten teachers to set ideal expectations for incoming Sunset Mesa kindergarten students, known as one of the highest caliber kindergarten programs. Our Pre K students are exceptionally well prepared emotionally, socially, and academically.

In January and February, Pre-K students are individually invited to visit kindergarten for a full day. A real treat!

For Pre K students, both the Early Childhood and Montessori teachers introduce kindergarten-style activities during the last trimester.

Pre-K and kindergarten teachers meet in August to discuss each student so that the transition is smooth.

10. What is the financial cost? What fundraising does your school do?

The tuition that families pay covers almost all costs. Sunset Mesa makes no separate charges for instructional materials, activities fees, technology fees, yearbook, or gross receipts tax. Families do purchase their own school supplies and are occasionally asked to pay a small amount for a classroom or school activity. Optional expenses include hot lunch, milk, summer programs, and extended care.

Families are NOT asked to fundraise at any point during the school year to contribute to the operation of the school. Annual fund drives, capital campaigns, and Christmas paper sales do not happen at Sunset Mesa. No one will ask you to name the school as a beneficiary in your will.