



La Escuela Cooperativa

DE SAYULITA

HANDBOOK

<http://www.escuelasayulita.org/>

School Hours

9:00 am – 2:00pm

Monday - Friday

(Escuela Cooperativa follows the public school holiday schedule for Mexico.)

Address

Miramar y Manual Rodriguez No. 18 Letra H



BIENVENIDOS A LA ESCUELA COOPERATIVA DE SAYULITA

Bienvenidos a la Escuela Cooperativa de Sayulita. Our school serves children aged 3 years to 5 years. This handbook is a useful reference for all families and staff in the preschool.

Our goal is to ensure that families feel welcomed at the preschool and that everyone becomes involved in the education of their children. This handbook is a guide to what your child will experience at la escuela, how it is organized and how you can be a part of the educational experience of your child.

Please be sure to ask any questions that are not answered here. Your teacher is available to help you understand the operation of the school.

Your input is always welcomed, so please let us know if you have ideas to help la escuela become the best educational environment possible for your child.

Meet the 2017/2018 Team:

Dulce Aurora Lopez Yanez, Lead Teacher

Maria de los Angeles Plazola Vargas, Assistant Teacher

Miriam Rojas Castro, Montessori trainer

Roxana Adams, Advisor

Cap Sparling, Advisor

Melina Anteaga Ponce, Accountant

Cesar Jonathan Galindo Cardona, President of Advisory Council

Martha and Larry Casazza, Founders and financial managers



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- **Vision**
- **Mission**
- **Goals**
- **The Basics**
- **Curriculum**
- **Structure**
 - **Advisory Council**
 - **Teachers**
 - **Parents**
- **Communication**
- **Finances**
 - **Fundraising**
- **School Policies**
 - **Registration**
 - **Student Expectations**
 - **Parent Expectations**
 - **Drop off/Pick up**
 - **Child Illness**
 - **School Closings**
 - **Classroom Visits**
 - **Discipline**
 - **Clean-Up Days**



Vision

To collaborate with the Sayulita community in order to create an innovative educational opportunity for its youngest children.

Mission

La Escuela Cooperativa de Sayulita will collaborate with the local families and educators of Sayulita to create a Montessori-based preschool for 3-5 year olds that will contribute to their early development and start them on the path to lifelong learning.

Goals

- To create a curriculum for 3-5 year olds that encourages peer-to-peer learning, develops self- confidence and a curiosity for lifelong learning.
- To enhance local pride through the integration of Mexican arts and culture across the curriculum.
- To provide English language instruction.
- To introduce environmental concerns across the curriculum.
- To include caretakers in the educational setting through volunteerism and skills training.
- To create a community-based school where families feel welcomed.

The Basics

- The Parent Advisory Council meets once a month, and the meetings will be announced ahead of time to all parents. Parents are always welcome and are members of the Council.
- Escuela Cooperativa is a tuition-free school as long as parents are able to volunteer at the school on a weekly basis as scheduled by the teacher. There is a small tuition for those parents unable to volunteer.
- Children cannot be dropped off at school before 8:45 a.m. and must be picked up promptly at 2:00 in the afternoon.



- **Helping days are special for your child. Please do not bring siblings to school on those days.**
- **Smoking is not allowed anywhere in the building or on the grounds.**
- **Use of a cell phone is prohibited in the classrooms when class is in session.**
- **Be considerate of the neighborhood when you drop off and pick up your children.**
- **When someone other than you will be picking up your child from school, remember to write this on the Sign-In Sheet located in the classroom and let the teacher assistant know.**
- **There is a Visitor's Sign-In Sheet in the hall at school. Any visitors to the school (other than the parents of children enrolled) must sign in and be accompanied by a staff member or specially trained volunteer.**

Curriculum

The curriculum is built on the Montessori approach to education. The age groups will be mixed in order to encourage peer-to-peer learning. The day will be divided into segments based on learning activities from the Montessori model.

Montessori teachers do more than present curriculum. Montessori nurtures and inspires the human potential, leading children to ask questions, think for themselves, explore, investigate, and discover. Our ultimate objective is to help them to learn how to learn independently, retaining the curiosity, creativity, and intelligence with which they were born. Montessori teachers don't simply present lessons; they are facilitators, mentors, coaches, and guides.

Traditionally, teachers "teach students the basic facts and skills that they will need to succeed in the world." Studies show that in many classrooms, as much as 40 percent of the day may be spent on discipline and classroom management. Montessori educators play a very different role. Today, many Montessori schools prefer to call their teachers "guides."

Whatever they're called, Montessori teachers are rarely the center of attention, for this is not their class; it is the "Children's House." Normally Montessori teachers will not spend much time working with the whole class at once. Their primary role is to prepare and maintain the physical, intellectual, and social/emotional environment within which the children will work. Certainly, a key aspect of this is the selection of intriguing and developmentally appropriate opportunities for learning to meet the needs and interests of each child in the class.

Montessori guides have four principle goals:

- to awaken the child's spirit and imagination;
- to encourage a normal desire for independence and high sense of self-esteem;
- to help develop the kindness, courtesy, and self-discipline that will allow them to become a full member of society; and
- to help the child learn how to observe, question, and explore ideas independently.

(Adapted from Montessori 101: Montessori Basics for Parents by Tim Seldin.)

Structure

Advisory Council

The Advisory Council will hold monthly meetings which will be announced ahead of time to ensure that everyone can attend. The Council is composed of all parents, teachers and invited community members. It is led by two co-coordinators who serve as the liaison between the teachers and the other parents. These leaders are also responsible for scheduling the meetings and communicating with parents. In addition to volunteering in the classroom or paying tuition, all parents are expected to attend Advisory Council meetings and be actively engaged in its work. The Council will set up parent committees and oversee their responsibilities.

Parent committees include the following:

- Indoor maintenance (primary responsibility is to maintain a healthy and clean environment in the classroom and bathroom)



- **Communications** (primary responsibility is to ensure that all contact numbers are up to date and that parents are kept up to date on current activities at the school)
- **Family Activities** (primary responsibility is to plan fun events that encourage families to get to know each other)
- **Fundraising** (primary responsibility is to work with the Sayulita community and the financial managers to raise money that ensures that free tuition is sustained)

Teachers

Teachers in a cooperative preschool have a very collaborative relationship with the parents, and open communication is essential. The classroom has two teachers, a lead teacher and an assistant both trained in the Montessori approach to education. They serve as a “teaching team.” The ratio at Escuela Cooperativa is two teachers for every 20 children.

The teaching team is responsible for planning and carrying out the educational program. They will schedule parent conferences at least three times per year. Conferences are available at any time by parent request. The teachers are always available for informal consultation to discuss concerns or questions that you may have.

Parents

When you enroll your child in Escuela Cooperativa, you become one of the member families who help to operate the school. You agree to accept the following responsibilities:

- To complete all forms requested by the school prior to your child attending.
- To help in the classroom on a rotating basis. One parent from each family must make the commitment to donate their time to the school on a weekly basis. If this is not possible, a monthly tuition will be required.
- To actively participate on a committee managed by the Advisory Council.
- To attend all parent/teacher conferences.
- To participate in fundraising activities scheduled to enhance the educational environment of the school.
- To participate in the maintenance of a clean and healthy school environment.
- To keep informed about school activities.



Communication

Communication is a cooperative effort in every way. Each family has a “mail drawer” at the school where notices and communication between families is distributed. Families are expected to check their mail drawer each day that their child attends class. The Advisory Council will put out regular notices about meetings and issues of concern to all parents.

Email is an excellent way to maintain contact with the school and teachers. All families and teachers are strongly encouraged to have an email account where they can be contacted. Parents are urged not to call teachers in the evenings. If there are questions or concerns, please schedule a time to talk with them at the end of the school day.

The teachers have a work mailbox at the school. Parents can leave notes for them, and the teachers will check them every day.

Phone numbers for all families must be current and on file at the school in case of an emergency. There should also be a backup number on file in case the parent cannot be reached.

If you have concerns about the class or your child, please bring them to the teacher. If your concerns are about matters outside the classroom, please bring them to the Advisory Council.

Parent/Teacher conferences are scheduled three times per year or more often if necessary for an individual child. The intent is to set goals for your child with the teacher. In addition, the teacher will discuss your child’s progress toward those goals. Parents are welcome to schedule additional conferences at any time during the school year.

Finances

Escuela Cooperativa is a tuition-free school. It is organized as a 501©3 in the United States which allows it to raise funds throughout the year. The financial managers are responsible for the majority of the fundraising activity and will ensure that the teachers are paid and the lease is maintained. Individuals are solicited to sponsor children in order to keep expenses low.



This fundraising provides an excellent foundation for the school but does not cover all expenses. The school depends on families to contribute their time and energy to ensure the ongoing excellence of the school. Each family is required to volunteer in the classroom each week. If they are not able to contribute in this way, they will be assessed a monthly tuition fee. This tuition will be due at the beginning of each month, and failure to pay will result in a late fee and the possible dismissal of their child.

The 2017/2018 tuition rate for those families not able to volunteer weekly is \$1000 monthly. Payment will be made to the financial managers and deposited in the school's bank account.

The school will hold at least one fundraising event during the school year to directly enhance the school. Parents are expected to contribute to these events through time, energy, or donations. These events will be planned by the parents and open to the community.

School Policies

Registration

Students who are between the ages of 3 (as of December 1, 2017) and 5 are eligible to register for school. Children must be potty trained before they start school, and all required forms must be completed and turned into the school. Parents must provide the child's birth certificate, CURP and an immunization card before the first day of school.

At any time during the year when the relationship between the school and family is not mutually satisfactory, continued enrollment will be reviewed by the family, teacher and head of the Advisory Council.

Student Expectations

Students are expected to attend school on time every day that classes are scheduled. They will treat other students and the teachers with respect and understand the rules for acceptable classroom behavior. They will collaborate with the other children and help when they are asked. They will learn how to resolve differences with others through talking them through.

Parent Expectations

As a helper in the classroom, the following guidelines apply:

- The teacher will structure the activity.
- The parent should arrive 15 minutes before the activity is to start.
- If you are unable to attend, please find a replacement parent.
- Siblings are not allowed to attend with you on your helping day. It is too distracting for both you and the other children.
- Please look to the teacher for guidance on any discipline problems that may occur while you are in the classroom.
- Your special skills and interests are really valuable for the educational environment. Playing an instrument, playing a special game, doing crafts or art projects, teaching dance or planting a garden are all valuable activities.
- If you are in charge of the snack or lunch, please plan to serve the children and help with clean up. Be aware of any food policies the school may have around allergies or other health-related issues. Do not plan to bring any peanut or nut products and try to provide a well-balanced lunch that includes fruit and/or vegetables.

Drop Off/ Pick Up

Class starts at 9:00 in the morning and ends at 2:00 in the afternoon. Students should not be dropped off before 8:45 or after 9:00 in the morning. Your child will be signed in by the teacher or assistant. If you are not picking them up in the afternoon, please let the teacher know who will be picking them up. If your regular contact information is different for a certain day, be sure to let the teacher know when you sign in.

All children must be picked up at 2:00 by an authorized person. If no one arrives by 2:15, a teacher will stay with the child, but there may be a late fee charged.

Child Illness

It is often difficult to decide when to keep a young child home from school due to illness. If your child does not feel well enough to participate comfortably in usual activities (extreme tiredness, persistent crying or unexplained irritability) or if they require more care than the



staff is able to provide without affecting the health and safety of the other children, please keep your child at home. Please let the teacher know that your child will not be attending school that day. If your child is diagnosed with an illness that could be contagious, please inform the teacher so that other parents can be informed.

When a child becomes ill at school, the teacher will contact the parents first. If they cannot be reached, she will call the emergency contact. The child will be isolated from the other children until they can be picked up by a parent. When a child is hurt or injured at school, the teacher will administer first aid and fill out an accident report. All teachers will be trained to administer CPR if necessary. (This training is available and recommended for all parents too.)

School Closings

If the school is closed for any reason, all parents will be notified as soon as possible at the contact number they have provided to the school.

Classroom Visits

Escuela Cooperativa welcomes visitors to the school. To ensure the safety of our students, the following is required:

- Visitor must be registered ahead of time and met at the front door by a member of the staff or advisory council.
- Visitor must show a photo id and sign in at the front door.
- If a parent wants to visit on day they are not assigned to help, they must inform the teacher ahead of time.

Discipline

Discipline at Escuela Cooperativa is based on a positive approach rather than a negative one. Our underlying goal is to help a child make more appropriate choices and learn better skills for interacting with others. At the beginning of the school year, the teacher will set up guidelines for behavior to ensure a safe environment and promote positive self-esteem for all children.



We prohibit the use of physical touch as a method of discipline except in the case of needing to restrain a child from injuring themselves or others. Discipline that blames, criticizes, discourages and creates barriers to the development of a positive self-image is not appropriate. The teacher assures consistency in our approach by acting as the role model for children and parents who are helping in the classroom.

Clean Up Days

Regular school cleanup is important for the quality of the educational environment at the school. Clean up days will be scheduled monthly, and parents are expected to participate on a rotating basis as assigned. Parents will come to the school and work together to clean the classroom including furniture, windows, instructional materials, toys and anything else that the teacher and Advisory Council see as necessary. Children should not accompany parents on cleanup day.

These days will normally be scheduled on Saturdays from 9:00-12:00. Parents will bring their own cleaning supplies as assigned ahead of time.

Although it is not encouraged, parents may pay a non-participation fee of \$300. This must be paid in full before your child starts school.