



2009-2010 Wait Pool Information

Dear Prospective Preschool and Toddler Families,

Thank you for your interest in our programs. We would like for every family to know as much as possible about our Parent-Cooperative Montessori Preschool before making the decision to register. This letter is designed to answer the most common questions that parents have. If you have any further questions, or if you would like to schedule a visit, you may call the school at 646-3801.

For **50 years** OVCNS has been the only Parent Cooperative Preschool in the Ojai Valley. We are a registered non-profit, cooperative school. The teachers are trained and credentialed professionals, but the administrators, maintenance crew, assistant teachers, publicists, and everything else are all parent volunteers. Not only does this type of system keep our tuition the low, but this is a wonderful way for families to grow close by spending time working and playing together, and being a central part of their child's early educational experience.

Another unique aspect of OVCNS's programs is a high level of *parental involvement*. Our Toddler Program is a non-separation program, where a parent or caregiver attends class with the child. In preschool, parents are welcome to stay with their children everyday, and are required to work one class day per week or bi-weekly (depending on the number of families enrolled), assisting the teacher and helping with general clean-up. We recognize that all children are comfortable with separation from caregivers at different times, hence a separation is never "forced" at OVCNS, but "*gently supported*". Children are given the opportunity to feel safe and learn to trust other adults in their own time.

Besides workdays, parents are asked to serve on one committee per year, which generally averages out to 2-3 hours per month of volunteer time. The committees include: field trip planning, organizing the library, purchasing cleaning supplies, publicity, fundraising, and school photographer. In the application process, you will be contacted by the head of Committees and be assigned your committee. Parents are asked to attend monthly parent meetings where we discuss business, have a discussion led by our teachers or parent education specialists, and have fun together as a community! Free childcare is always provided at these meetings. Also, for parents interested in being further involved in the school, yearly elections are held for our Board of Directors positions. These positions include: President, VP/Treasurer, Registrar, Fundraising, Committees, and Secretary.

We also provide *free, monthly parent education* sessions, during your child's class time, with a parent education specialist. Here parents are given the opportunity to learn and explore ways of parenting and communicating that promote respect for children's ideas and abilities. This includes: observing children unobtrusively, education on children's developmental abilities, and helping children learn to resolve conflicts peacefully. A few times a year OVCNS offers *extended parent education workshops* for a reasonable cost, giving us all more time to learn and practice these important relationship skills. We believe that we are always learning new ways of living with our children and others as our families grow. At OVCNS parents receive much support from other parents, as well as helpful information from many experts in the field of Early Childhood Development and Education.

OVCNS is currently offering a 2-hour long Toddler (non-separation) Program for children aged 18 months to 3 years with their caregiver, and a half-day Preschool Program for children aged 3 to 6 years.

1290 grand avenue • p.o. box 1117 • ojai, ca 93024 • (805) 646-3801
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Jennifer Wing is our **Director** and **Toddler Teacher**. Jennifer is an experienced, certified Montessori teacher, as well as a strong believer in parent cooperative education. She received her BA in English from UC Santa Barbara, and obtained her training in Early Childhood Education from Santa Barbara City College. She has been involved with OVCNS for several years now, first as a parent and then as an assistant teacher, before taking over as Director and head teacher in 2004. Jennifer brings many wonderful and enriching opportunities to the classroom.

Our **Parent Education** Program is one of the most unique and valuable assets benefiting families attending OVCNS. **Carol Castanon** is our parent education specialist. She works as a consultant to our director and teachers, and conducts our monthly Parent Education sessions, which are free to all families enrolled at OVCNS (and they occur during class time!). Carol has a BA in Human Development/Early Child Education from Pacific Oaks College. She has extensive background in teaching all ages, with specialties in anti-bias curriculum, conflict resolution, and special education.

Waiting Pool information: Before filling out any enrollment forms, we require that you visit the teacher and classroom with your child. Please call the school, and leave a message in the “enrollment voicemail” about scheduling this visit. After you have met with the teacher, if you want us to hold a spot for your child in the wait pool, please complete the wait pool enrollment form. Mail this form to our PO Box listed below. Once we have received this form, I will call you to let you know when there is an opening, and proceed with enrolling your child in a program.

Our website is ovcns.org

Thank you for your interest and feel free to call the school with any questions you may have! 646-3801

Claudia Mathieu
Registrar
OVCNS