

Tuition Assistance Position Statement and Awarding Guidelines

Position Statement

The Montessori Academy Edison Lakes (TMA) believes the primary responsibility for financing a student's independent school education rests with the family. However, we also recognize the need to provide assistance in order to retain a broad spectrum of students in concert with The Montessori Academy's mission. Our students thrive in a culture where differences are honored and diversity is accepted and celebrated. We believe that the highest quality education is only possible in a community that welcomes all. Children will be better prepared for the world when they have spent their critical early years learning and growing in a diverse community of peers.

The Montessori Academy makes a commitment to the longevity of a child's education through the Montessori system and we strive to help those families who make a similar commitment to remain at The Montessori Academy for the duration of their child's elementary and junior high education.

While recognizing that personal sacrifice is often necessary, we are committed to making your educational experience with us accessible and affordable. Through tuition assistance and payment plans we work toward making a Montessori education attainable for qualifying students.

Awarding Guidelines

Tuition at The Montessori Academy is defined as the contracted expenses for enrollment in a school year program including Before and/or After Care that is contracted for the school year. Tuition Assistance does *not* apply to fees, extracurricular activities, Before/After Care use via the *Now and Then* payment plan, lunches, athletics, enrichment classes, and activity or field trip fees. Tuition Assistance or Scholarships awarded by an outside service and/or TMA sibling discount may reduce the tuition used to calculate the amount of money awarded by TMA.

Tuition discounts are available for families based on the following guidelines:

Application Data

Any current TMA family or new applicant wishing to be considered for Tuition Assistance must:

- Submit a current enrollment contract along with determined deposit or deposit waiver.
- Complete a TMA Tuition Assistance application.
- Submit a detailed application to FACTS Grant & Aid, an independent, outside service which fully evaluates assets owned, income, liabilities, net worth, etc. in order to determine how much the family is expected to contribute toward their children's education.
- Submit the most recent full year federal tax return(s) to FACTS Grant & Aid.

- Demonstrate a commitment to the Montessori educational principles and to the mission and values of The Montessori Academy, including participating in their child's education through volunteering and attendance at school events.
- Please be aware that applications with incomplete information cannot be processed by FACTS, and will not be considered by the Tuition Assistance Committee until complete information is submitted.
- Please also be aware that submitting false or deliberately misleading information is grounds for immediate revocation of any Tuition Assistance Offers, Awards, and Agreements; and will result in a **permanent** ban on applying for any future Tuition Assistance.

Award Prioritization

Specific priority criteria and time frames have been established for the application process for tuition assistance. Awards are limited, and are granted on a first-come, first-served basis.

Priority order of consideration relative to the granting of Tuition Assistance is as follows:

1. *Returning families who have received Tuition Assistance during the previous school year*

- Priority for aid is given to returning families. Returning families who received Tuition Assistance in previous years must complete all applications within the required time frames. Awarded Tuition Assistance will be based on their need analysis and funding available within the budget.
 - If the family's need is relatively the same as previous year(s), the goal is to maintain consistent funding. If the family's need has decreased based on the FACTS Grant & Aid calculation, the Tuition Assistance Award may be decreased. Likewise, if the family's need has increased based on the FACTS Grant & Aid calculation, the financial Award may be increased. The calculation of need is performed on an annual basis by FACTS Grant & Aid.
 - Incoming siblings of all families will be considered in the family's need and Award process.

The granting of Tuition Assistance in any given year does not guarantee the granting of Tuition Assistance in subsequent years.

2. *Students enrolled in elementary and junior high programs and full day early childhood classes due to higher tuition at those levels*

- Tuition Assistance is not available for students enrolled in the Toddler classes

3. *Returning families who are new applicants for Tuition Assistance*

- Returning families who are new Tuition Assistance applicants must complete all applications within the required time frames. Awarded Tuition Assistance will be based on their need analysis and funding available within the budget.
- The goal is to award Tuition Assistance comparable to the percentage of need met for families that have received financial assistance in the past.
- Some subjectivity may enter into this decision for families that are new applicants for Tuition Assistance. Have they stayed current with past year's tuition payments? Are they active in the school community?

4. New families who are applicants for Tuition Assistance

- New families who are new Tuition Assistance applicants must complete all applications within the required time frames. Awarded Tuition Assistance will be based on their need analysis and funding available within the budget.
- While families that are new to TMA and are applying for Tuition Assistance are expected to comply with application deadlines, it is recognized that often new families are beginning the enrollment process after the deadlines. Applications for Tuition Assistance should be completed as soon as possible for consideration in the current school year. The granting of Awards is on a first come first served basis as noted above.
- Awards will be based on remaining funds of the annual Tuition Assistance budget and/or additional funds approved by the Finance Committee as deemed appropriate.

Awards

The above factors are analyzed by FACTS and the Tuition Assistance Committee, and a Tuition Assistance Award is determined. The Award takes into consideration families with more than one child, and is primarily based on determined financial need, as well as the Mission, enrollment, and program needs of TMA.

The Tuition Assistance Award will be a maximum of 75% of total final tuition for any applicant. The total final tuition includes staff and sibling discounts, other scholarship funding and the Tuition Assistance Award.

A family may request review of the Award and request additional consideration because of documented extraordinary circumstances. Any exceptions to these guidelines will be decided on an individual basis by the Tuition Assistance Committee.

When the family receives notice of the Award, the Acceptance of Award agreement must be returned within 10 business days of receiving the Award. Any Award not accepted by this date will be returned to the Tuition Assistance pool and the Offer will be null & void.

Excess Need

To the extent that the number of qualifying families exceeds the Tuition Assistance budget, the Tuition Assistance committee shall consult with the Finance Committee to seek approval for additional funds for Tuition Assistance Awards. Need based Tuition Assistance will not be capped for any given year.

The Tuition Assistance Committee in conjunction with the Finance Committee will evaluate the impact on the revenue and expenses, when considering whether to grant additional Tuition Assistance. Tuition Assistance granted in excess of the budget must be approved by the Finance Committee prior to Awards being made.

In addition to TMA's existing Tuition Assistance (TA) Program, TMA has chosen to participate in the Indiana School Scholarship Tax Credit Program (ISSTCP). This program offers Indiana State tax credits to encourage private donations to qualified schools for the purpose of scholarships.

While TMA administers the application, evaluation, and determination of Award process in conformance with our existing TA guidelines, participating schools must work with an approved Scholarship Granting Organization (SGO) to administer ISSTCP funds. TMA currently partners with Sagamore Institute's Scholarships for Education Choice (SEC) program as our approved SGO.

While TMA continues to encourage all families in need to apply for TA, Indiana's ISSTCP eligibility guidelines are slightly different. To be eligible for consideration under ISSTCP, the student/s must be:

- At least 5 years old
- An Indiana resident
- From a household with total annual income of 200% or less of the USDA guidelines for Free/Reduced Meal Program <http://www.tfaforms.com/4648592>

All families who apply for TA will be automatically considered under **BOTH** TMA's TA program, and the SEC program. If you do not qualify for one, you will be automatically considered under the other.

Both programs use the same FACTS Grant & Aid application. All other Award Guidelines, Application Data, Award Prioritization, Award, and Excess Need criteria are identical to, and will be administered in conformance with, TMA's published *Tuition Assistance Position Statement and Awarding Guidelines* and our other existing TA standard operating procedures.