



ITHAN MONTESSORI

Parent Handbook

Revised August 2023

Ithan Montessori School

536 Conestoga Road

Villanova, PA 19085

Main: 610-937-4499

info@ithanmontessori.com

www.ithanmontessori.com

Welcome

We are delighted that you have chosen Ithan Montessori School to begin your child's educational journey! Developing and nurturing your child's love of learning is a responsibility we take very seriously. Our goal is to provide an educational atmosphere that incorporates the Montessori Philosophy, emphasizing development of your child's mind, body, and spirit.

Please take time to carefully review this handbook. It is designed to answer many of the questions you may have regarding school policies and procedures. We encourage parents to take an active role in their child's educational experience. Over the course of the school year, there will be numerous opportunities for parents to participate in activities and events. If you have any questions or concerns during your child's enrollment at Ithan Montessori, feel free to speak to his or her teacher or the school's director.

The Montessori Philosophy

The Montessori approach offers a broad vision of education as an aide to life. It is designed to help the child with his or her task of inner construction as he or she grows from childhood to maturity. This philosophy succeeds because it draws its principles from the natural development of the child. Its flexibility provides a matrix allowing each individual child's inner directive freely guides him or her toward growth.

Montessori classrooms provide a prepared environment in which the child is free to respond to his or her natural tendency to work. The child's innate passion for learning is encouraged by providing opportunities to engage in spontaneous, purposeful activities, under the guidance of a trained adult. Through individual work, the child develops concentration and joyful self-discipline. Within a framework of order, the child progresses at his own pace and rhythm, according to individual capabilities.

Mission

Ithan Montessori's mission is to:

- Provide excellence in Montessori Education
- Provide an enriched and welcoming learning community, which embodies the Montessori principles of respect for self, respect for others and respect for the environment, as well as for our country's freedom and democratic principles
- Nurture, inspire and support each child's individual development
- Foster the growth of self-confidence, independence, self-discipline, and personal and social responsibility
- Foster the child's innate love of learning and to make their introduction to education a joyful and purposeful start to the journey of life-long learning

Enrollment Policy

Enrollment in Ithan Montessori School is open to children ages 24 months to 6 years. Enrollment shall be granted without regard to race, color, creed, religion, nation of origin, gender, or disability. Initial enrollment is contingent upon receipt of completed registration forms, and acceptance of Ithan Montessori's policies and guidelines.

Children enrolled in the Primary Age Group must be potty trained.

The Tuition Agreement is not meant to serve as a contract guaranteeing service for any duration.

Ithan Montessori School reserves the right to dismiss any parent or child at any time, with or without cause. Continued enrollment at Ithan Montessori is contingent upon the parent and child's adherence to the school policies as outlined in this handbook including, but not limited to timely payment of all fees and tuition.

Interview

The interview is an informal way for prospective parents and Ithan Montessori School to become acquainted with one another. All prospective students will be informally assessed by an appropriate teacher. Placement decisions are entirely within the discretion of the Director.

School Hours of Operation

Full day: 8:30 – 3:30 pm

Extended morning: 7:30 – 8:30 am

Extended afternoon: 3:30 – 5:30 pm

- All programs must be registered for separately.

Registration

A one-time non-refundable registration fee of \$500 will be assessed upon enrollment.

Afterwards, an annual non-refundable deposit of \$500 will be charged to enroll for the next school year.

Required Records

Emergency Contact Form: Any person authorized to pick up your child must be listed on this form. This form gives permission to our teachers to provide emergency care, minor first aid and transport your child in case of emergency. All custodial parents must review and sign this form every six months.

Health Appraisal: This form must be completed annually while your child is enrolled in school. This form must be completed by a licensed physician and returned to the school within 30 days of enrollment.

Tuition Agreement: This agreement will state the program(s) for which your child is registered, as well as your payment schedule for the school year. Adherence to this agreement is a condition of enrollment.

Tuition Policy

All custodial parents, prior to enrollment in the school, must sign tuition agreements. A non-refundable registration fee is required at the time of enrollment, or sooner if securing future enrollment.

Monthly tuition payments are due on the first of the month of September through June. Tuition that is not received by the 10th of the month will incur a \$25 late fee. Non-payment of tuition is grounds for immediate and permanent dismissal from the program.


There is no credit given for vacation, child illness, suspension, or closings due to emergency situations or inclement weather. Tuition payments are accepted in the form of check or credit card or recurring payment. Tuition can also be paid online at myprocare.com as well as through Procure Engage (the app).

There will be a \$35 fee assessed for tuition checks returned by the bank for any reason. Parents will be responsible for re-issuing a second check. If two checks are returned in a school year, your payment must be made by credit/debit card or money order.

Arrival and Departure Procedures

Ithan Montessori is located on the property of Christ Church, in the building directly behind the church. Parents should follow the driveway around to the rear parking lot when dropping their children off for school. Please be mindful of the 15-mph speed limit. Morning drop off is done via car line. Please pull up to the main entrance by the playground and stay in your car. A teacher will come and escort them into the building. Please be patient and give yourselves plenty of time at morning drop off. These procedures are in place to keep both yours and our families safe. Children signed up for early care must walk their children to the door and ring the doorbell.

Students will be dismissed to their parents or caregivers at the door of the school at 3:30 pm.



Children are expected to be picked up from school on time. Late pickups are disruptive to our afternoon programs, create anxiety in the child, and produce unsafe student/teacher ratios. In the event of a late pick up, parents will incur a charge of \$1.00 per minute, per child. Please pull into a designated parking space. Do not block the driveway or exit. Please utilize the utmost caution when entering and exiting the parking lot.

Keep in mind that you must inform the school director if anyone other than the primary care giver will be picking your child up from school on any given day. We require a photo ID to be presented if our teacher does not recognize the person picking up. Please include at least 3 people on your emergency contact form who are allowed to pick up your child from school.

Attendance

The school day begins at 8:30. The smooth flow of our program depends on children's prompt arrival and departure. Late arrivals are disrupting to the classroom environment when a child enters late. In addition, a child will have a difficult time adjusting to the classroom community if they are often late or absent. If you arrive after carline has ended, please walk your child to the door and ring the bell. A staff member will answer, and they will escort your child to their classroom. If your child is leaving early, please notify us ahead of time. Please send a message through Procare Engage prior to 9:30 am to notify the teachers when a student will be absent from school. Primary children, may not be dropped off at school after 1:00pm without prior authorization from the office, and having eaten lunch. Readiness children before noon, as it is very disruptive to nap time.


The Parent-School Partnership

Our school director and teachers have been carefully selected based on their education level, Montessori expertise, and experience in the field. Early Childhood Education teachers supervise the children in their classroom at all times. All staff are required to have child abuse, criminal, NSOR and FBI clearances, as well as a bi-annual physical exam. We ensure all teachers are certified in first aid, CPR and fire safety.

There will be a mandatory parent meeting at the beginning of each school year. The Director and staff will take you through your child's day and explain the set up and "works" in the classroom. These dates will be announced at the beginning of the school year.

Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO)

Ithan Montessori encourages parents to be involved with their child's education. We appreciate support and feedback, as we strive to fulfill our mission. Ithan Montessori fosters an environment in which families grow together through education and community service. The PTO will assist in expanding our vision of community involvement and service, as well as organize fun school events.



Developmental Assessments/Report Cards

Your child's academic and social development will be formally assessed twice per school year. This assessment is designed to report the progress teachers are observing, recording, and evaluating about your child's skills, knowledge, behaviors, and accomplishments.

Student Clothing

One of the primary goals of a Montessori environment is to help children become independent in caring for themselves. Children, as Dr. Montessori noted, will often say, "Help me do it myself." In order to reach this goal, it is important to provide children with clothing they can get in and out of independently. Please dress your child in clothing that he or she can successfully adjust without adult help. Your child will get dirty. He or she should be dressed in casual and comfortable clothing that allows for freedom of movement, and the freedom to explore their environment. Clothing should not be cumbersome or formal, as such attire may inhibit the child's ability to explore water, art, the outdoors, and movement. Each child needs a pair of hard soled shoes to leave at school.

These shoes will be worn inside the school environment only and should be such that the child can independently put them on or remove them. Occasionally, accidents happen - water spills or an item break, and thus the inside shoes **MUST** have a hard sole to protect the child's feet from injury. In addition, open-toed shoes, Crocs, and flip-flops are **NOT** permitted.

Each child must also bring three extra sets of clothing to school, so that he or she has something to change into if clothing becomes soiled. Please label all extra clothing with the child's initials. Outdoor clothing should also be appropriate for the season. Since our outdoor environments become particularly muddy, we ask that each child also brings rain boots to leave at school.

Lunch/Snack

Ithan Montessori School is a Nut Free School. We will provide your child with a healthy morning and afternoon snack. We encourage parents to pack a healthy lunch limiting juices. No candy is permitted in lunch boxes. Each classroom is equipped with a refrigerator and a microwave to heat any warm lunches the children may bring. Please make sure your child's lunch contains 2 napkins and any necessary silverware.

Birthday Celebrations

Ithan Montessori celebrates each child's birthday with a "Celebration of life." A paper will be sent home before the birthday with some areas to fill out. Please send the paperwork back along with one photograph of your child from each year of their life. Due to classroom allergies and our promotion of healthy eating, we ask you limit any classroom treats to fruit, vegetables, or pretzels.



Early Intervention Services

While all children grow and develop in unique ways, some children experience delays in their development. Children in Pennsylvania with developmental delays benefit from a state supported collaboration among parents, service practitioners and others who work with young children needing special services. Our program is open to any services your child may require.

Calendars/School Newsletters

Monthly calendars and newsletters will be available online or hard copy to parents of Ithan Montessori students. The calendar and newsletter will keep parents informed of the activities and events occurring at the school. You are responsible for checking and knowing the calendar, particularly in regard to school closings and canceled aftercare.

Montessori Compass

Montessori Compass is a website to which each family will have an account. Through this website you will be able to see photographs of your child in school, access the school calendar and send and receive messages from your child's teacher.

Holidays and Breaks

Ithan Montessori will be closed for all major holidays. Winter break will occur at the end of December each year. A Spring break will occur in late March or early April each year. Please see your monthly calendar for specific dates. The academic year will run from September through June. A Montessori inspired summer camp will be offered for several weeks in the summer. Information for summer camp will be distributed in late winter.


Ithan celebrates a variety of holidays, as a way of expanding the child's awareness of other cultures. It is our belief that children need to become aware of different rituals and celebrations, as part of their experience of the world. We do not promote any ethnic or religious positions. If your family would like to share a special celebration with the children, please let us know.


Inclement Weather

Ithan Montessori will be closed in the event of severe weather. Closing information will be sent via Procure Engage as well as email.

Mandated Reporters

Under the Child Protective Services Act, mandated reporters are to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. All employees of Ithan Montessori are considered mandated reporters under the law. We take this responsibility seriously and do





everything within our means to protect the welfare and best interest of the children in our school. Suspicions need not be discussed with parents before potential abuse or neglect is reported.

Stake Holders

Stake holders are those groups or individuals who are significantly impacted by the children/families who attend Ithan Montessori, and who have the potential to impact our facility. A list of Stakeholders is available to view at the request of the parents.


Parent Code of Conduct


Ithan Montessori expects the parents of enrolled students to behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy and respect at all times. One of the goals of Ithan Montessori is to provide the most appropriate environment in which a child can grow, learn, and develop. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of the teachers and director, but also each and every adult who enters the school. Parents will be expected to behave in a manner which fosters this ideal environment. Parents who violate the Parent Code of Conduct will not be permitted on the school property thereafter.

- Swearing/Cursing: No parent or adult is permitted to curse or use other profane language on school property at any time. Such language is considered offensive and will not be tolerated.
- Threatening of employees, children, other parents, or adults associated with Ithan Montessori: Threats of any kind will not be tolerated. Parents must be always responsible for and in control of their behavior.
- Physical Punishment of your child (or other children) at the school: While Ithan Montessori does not seek to impose our disciplinary standards on families, the corporal punishment of children is prohibited in our school or on the grounds. While verbal reprimand may be appropriate it is not appropriate for parents to verbally abuse their child. Parents are strictly forbidden to discipline any child other than their own. If you see a situation between children that warrants an adult taking action, please bring it to the teacher's attention immediately.
- Smoking is always prohibited in or around the school.
- Contact using teacher's personal cell phones or emails is not permitted.
- Employees are not permitted to care for children off school property.

Discipline Policy

Ithan Montessori believes that keeping children busy and actively engaged decreases the frequency of behavior problems in the classroom. Our teachers only use positive guidance and redirection. Setting consistent, understandable, age-appropriate limits, fosters the child's ability to become self-controlled, which is our ultimate goal. Teachers encourage positive behavior, ignore negative behavior, and facilitate redirection. By teaching children that each choice they





make has a direct consequence, they will begin to learn to be responsible for their own actions. We encourage and teach children how to problem solve in order to avoid frustration that can lead to acting out. Ithan Montessori prohibits corporal punishment of any kind, cruel or severe punishment, humiliation, and verbal abuse. If a behavior problem exists, every attempt will be made to remedy the situation. However, dismissal of a child for behavioral reasons will be at the discretion of the Director and CEO.

Bullying

Ithan Montessori views bullying as negative or malicious acts toward another child or children that are premeditated. Children between the ages of 3 and 6, who are in an egocentric stage of social-emotional development are just learning social boundaries' and beginning to develop conflict resolution skills. Our staff helps children along this developmental path. Due to the premeditated nature of bullying, we rarely view physical and/or social interactions between children of this age as "bullying," but rather young children reacting in a developmentally accurate and spontaneous way. We do not condone or tolerate unkind or negative interactions. We help children learn to use their words instead of negative actions and teach them how to resolve conflicts peacefully. Children of this age are slowly growing out of egocentrism and learning how to understand a point of view from another's perspective. We make every effort to work with the child and family to help the child overcome negative behaviors. If you feel your child has been the target of negative behaviors from another child or children, please do not hesitate to contact the head of school or teacher. If your child or children come to you regarding a specific behavior or unkind words from another, we strongly suggest that you speak with the Director.

Dismissal Policy

Ithan Montessori reserves the right to dismiss any child at any time, with or without cause. A child must be dismissed if his or her parents are prohibited from entering the school property. Parents will be refunded any forward paid tuition within 30 days of dismissal. Any past due balances must be paid within 30 days of dismissal.

Notification of Schedule Change

If your child's schedule must change for any reason, please notify the school director as soon as possible. At least 2 weeks' notice of withdraw from the school must be given.

Health Policy

Ithan Montessori follows the American Academy of Pediatrics guideline for deciding when a child is healthy enough to participate in school. Any sick child should be kept home, especially when they have:

- Diarrhea or stools that contain blood or mucus, or loose bowl movements that cannot be
- 

- contained in the diaper
- Fever of 100.5 or over
- Cold or flu symptoms, e.g., sore throat, persistent cough, sneezing, vomiting
- Rash or discharge from the eyes or nose
- Head lice
- Sluggishness, persistent crying, irritability, or difficulty breathing
- Contagious or communicable disease
- Any symptoms prohibiting the child from going outside, or participating in the daily routine of the classroom

All children must be diarrhea and fever free for 24 hours without medication.

Care Action Plans

Ithan Montessori will administer medication including Epi-pens, asthma inhalers, etc. If your child requires any medical treatment or medication be administered during school hours, your child's physician must fill out a Care Action Plan. This plan must list warning symptoms to look for, and the proper steps to follow to care for your child in the event that staff might need to administer medication. Please discuss any Care Action Plans with your school director and classroom teacher.

Incident Reports

Minor scratches and scrapes Incident Reports will be communicated daily through Procure Engage. Parents will be called if an injury is moderate to severe in nature. This includes but is not limited to a cut that bleeds, a contusion, a fall from any classroom or outdoor equipment. Should a serious injury or illness occur, and hospital emergency treatment is necessary, the child will be transported, by ambulance and accompanied by the director or senior staff member. The child's parents will be contacted immediately and can make arrangements to join the child at the hospital.

Concerns and Complaints

Should you have any concerns or complaints concerning the school or program, please attempt to discuss these issues first with your child's teacher and then with the school director. If you're not completely satisfied with the answers you receive or would like to discuss further, please contact Catie Garofalo, COO at 610-272-8085