

Guest Blogger Audrey: Starting Preschool, Now What? Thinking Ahead To Elementary School Admissions

Description



Whether a working or stay-at-home parent, there are various tips to prepare for the private school admission process once your child begins preschool.

Begin to look at your child's personality as it relates to learning style, social interactions and emerging interests. Talk to your preschool teachers on a regular basis, asking open-ended questions about listening skills, responsiveness when asked to complete a task, interactions with friends, new talents, etc. Keep in mind that your child may act differently at school than at home.

For instance, when my daughter was 3-years old I perceived her as having the personality of a follower but at a parent/teacher conference I was told that she was equally comfortable as a leader and a follower and a source of comfort to friends. For working parents without as much opportunity to interact with teachers, find out if they're willing to give you an e-mail address so you can touch base more often. What you're ultimately looking for is in what school environment would your child best thrive. A few examples are structured, academic, progressive, a very small school (with only one class per grade) or artsy.

Attend as many preschool events as possible. This can provide opportunities to interact with families who have older children already at a private school and also to network with other parents who are usually eager to exchange information. Approach parents who have a private school's bumper sticker on their car or have older children who come to drop off or pick up and find out what school their

child attends. Ask about their experiences, what they like/dislike about the school, etc. I had never heard of any of the private schools to which we applied before my daughter was in her 2nd year of preschool and they came by word-of-mouth from fellow parents at our school.

Volunteer at your preschool, if possible. For working parents, this could involve helping at weekend or evening events. This not only increases your contact with other involved parents who may be in a similar situation but also it has the potential to look good on your private school application résumé.

Create a good relationship with your preschool director. Directors can be one of your closest allies when it comes time to apply to private schools. Not only should they have their pulse on the best private schools and what each offers but also on which would be a good fit for your child.

Attend a kindergarten panel if your preschool offers one. At my daughter's preschool this consisted of an evening program where current and former parents with children at various local private, public and charter schools spoke about their school's philosophy, admission process and personal experience. During the Fall or Spring, attend the [Los Angeles Area Independent Elementary School's Kindergarten Fair](#). Admission Directors from most of L.A.'s private elementary schools are present to answer questions about their programs and admission process.

Do online research. If your child is even two years away from kindergarten, many schools will not allow you to tour until the year prior to kindergarten. Look at each school's mission and philosophy statement on their website. Does it seem to fit with what you want for your child? Check on tuition, uniform policy, or anything else that is important to your family.

Consider if you will want to enroll your child at a private school with a Pre-K program (often called DK, TK, or EK). This may be a factor depending on your child's birthday (many schools have a summer cut-off) as this will move your timeline up by a year.

Last but not least, enjoy this precious time in your toddler's life!

*Audrey Young has a background in Healthcare Compliance where she performed detailed research and analysis. She is a native of Los Angeles and attended public schools and universities. Her private school admission experience set in motion a desire to help guide parents through this process and ease any confusion, fear and anxiety. She is launching an admission consulting business, **The Admission Team**, and will be available to families applying for the 2013-14 school year and beyond.*

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Date Created

May 14, 2012

Author

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