

Four Questions For Gaby Fogelson, Former Interim Admissions Director at Archer School

Description



Gaby Fogelson is an educational consultant based in Los Angeles

1. How do admissions directors try to figure out if a family will be high-maintenance or difficult?
There are many signs of a high maintenance parent! Since I spent six years of my admissions career at Archer and held every role in the office beginning with Admissions Assistant to Interim Director of Admissions, I have seen how each person in an Admissions Office experiences the high maintenance

parent and that each member of the team's impressions can impact a family's chance of admission. The Admissions Assistant is typically the first line of defense and they bear the brunt of both the parent who is extremely *rude and entitled* and they also field phone calls from parents who *call constantly asking many questions that can be answered online!*

On the other hand, Admissions Directors and their Assistant Directors typically interview most parents and it is their job to assess whether a family would be a good fit for the school community. In the interview setting an Admissions Director often will learn if a parent has *unrealistic expectations of their child and/or a school*. For example, the parent may believe that their child is an ideal fit for a highly academic and traditional school but their child and his interview/assessment and supporting recommendations may present a much different story. These mismatched expectations tend to follow when a family enrolls in a school and create a lot of work for teachers and administrators. Finally, when parents blame their teacher or school for every issue that can indicate difficult and high maintenance.

2. For kindergarten, the preschool director can help; how? Preschool Directors can absolutely play an important role in the kindergarten admissions process. The level of involvement depends on the individual preschool. If a preschool sends the majority of their students to private elementary schools, that usually means the preschool director has experience and contacts with the elementary school which they can use during the process to help families get in.

These relationships can be especially helpful is if a child has a challenging visit during a school assessment. *In that case, the admission director can call the preschool director and candidly inquire further about the child.* It may have just been an off day for the preschooler or there may be more to the story but this relationship allows for the admission director to be able to pick up the phone and call the preschool director. This might lead to an observation at the child's preschool which might give a better sense of who the child is in a more comfortable environment.

3. Qualities of a bad parent interview? The worst parent interviews are typically *when a parent knows nothing about a school or comes across as disinterested*. Some examples: *confusing one school for another, unrealistic view of their child or confusing what is best for their child with their own needs, twitching their leg constantly or checking the clock every five minutes*. Finally, a personal pet peeve of mine is when a parent would show up to the interview in dressed in workout clothes, I think it's important to show you to take the process seriously!

4. Elements of a great written application? The best applications I have read give the reader a very clear sense of who the applicant and family are. While a middle or high school applicant's supplement should illustrate what specifically they love about their current school, how are they involved in their community and what they are passionate about, *an application stands out is when it goes beyond the surface*. For example, it's great to learn that a student plays volleyball and is on student council but when you read that he *used to be extremely shy, terrified of public speaking, and that having to stand up in front of his classmates to give his student council speech was one of the most challenging experiences* that ultimately gave him confidence which has helped him in school and volleyball. This gives the reader greater insight into who the student really is.

Gaby has over a decade of experience working in independent school admissions at Archer, Crossroads, Marymount and Westside Neighborhood School (WNS). As a native of Los Angeles, an independent school graduate, and an independent school parent, Gaby understands admissions from

every perspective. Gaby began her career in admissions at The Archer School for Girls. During her six years at Archer, she served as Assistant Director of Admissions and as a 6th grade advisor. She then worked at Marymount High School as the Associate Director of Admission. She worked as the Assistant Director of Admissions at the Westside Neighborhood School (WNS) a PS through 8th grade private school in Playa Vista. Finally, for two years, Gaby supported the Crossroads School admissions office as an interviewer before moving into her role as an independent educational consultant. Gaby understands the many educational models given her wide array of experience working in K-12, PS-8, 6-12, and 9-12 schools and in both co-ed and single sex school environments. Gaby volunteers annually with the Gabriella Foundation Charter School preparing students for independent school admissions interviews. Gaby holds an MA in Educational Studies from Loyola Marymount University and a BS in Psychology from Union College, NY. www.gabyfogelson.com

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