

Guest Blogger Jenny: Loitering On The Wait-List

Description

I know, I know. You thought that once the private elementary school letters came out, you'd be off the hook. You know the score. You pick a school from those that accepted your child and write that fat check and that would be the end of it.

Until your child was wait-listed.

The wait-list feels a bit like private school purgatory. Your child hasn't been accepted, yet. Perhaps there isn't enough room at the school. Perhaps there's some other, inexplicable reason for the wait-list status. You just don't know. When my daughter was wait-listed at both the schools she applied to (Mirman and John Thomas Dye), I was confused. What did it mean? Was it all over? Should I just accept the fate of another year at public school and forget about the whole thing, regarding the admissions process as some bad dream now receding into memory?

My stepsister, who attended Archer and Windward, filled me in. "Wait-list is good," she explained. "Many people just get rejected outright. The wait-list means they're still interested." It turns out that she was right. I got the call from Mirman in late June that there was a space, she took it, and the rest is history.

In the meanwhile, though, there were many awkward moments. After all, while you're going through the surreal private school admissions process, you're usually blabbing all about it. Your friends, family, acquaintances, mailmen, and the guy at the dry cleaner have all heard something, in excruciating detail. And now, it's just limbo. There's a feeling of inadequacy as you try to explain the situation, rationalizing it to anyone who will listen (this is an excellent time to have a shrink). Wait-listing implies second choice, second best, second rate, and you just know that's not true about your child. You feel like, at any moment, you could be given a ticket for private school wait-list loitering.

Of course, a parent whose child does get in everywhere faces some unfair scrutiny, too. I know someone whose daughter was accepted everywhere she applied. She's a wonderful student and a great kid. Someone had the nerve to imply it was because she was black. Pretty nasty and spiteful, isn't it? Hint: she writes this blog. Maybe there's no winning here.

Anyway, some advice to those who have been wait-listed. Don't stop contact with the schools. Call them every month or so, just to check in and remind them you're still interested. If there's a function, you might want to attend it, again to display your willingness to participate and be a good sport. Besides, even if your child doesn't get in off the wait-list, if you love the school, you might want to reapply next year. If that's the case, you definitely want to keep a good relationship going. You certainly don't want to burn any bridges.

In any case, pay no mind to the doubters and insulters. Those people are not your real friends (like you needed me to tell you that). Be a proud loiterer! Hang in there, and you might get a surprise phone call, too. And if you do get that phone call, CALL THEM BACK IMMEDIATELY. Because it's called a "list" for a reason, and there's more kids on it. Swipe up the space on the spot and don't think too hard about it. If you've worked this hard and come this far to get your child into the right school, the decision should be a done deal.

Then, take a deep breath, sit back, and enjoy the moment.

Jenny Heitz has worked as a staff writer for Coast Weekly in Carmel, freelanced in the South Bay, and then switched to advertising copywriting. Her daughter started 4th grade at Mirman School this year. She previously attended 3rd St. Elementary School. Jenny has been published recently in the Daily News and on Mamapedia, The Well Mom, Sane Moms, Hybrid Mom, The Culture Mom and A Child Grows In Brooklyn. She now writes about gift ideas and products on her blog, [Find A Toad](#).

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