

Reader Question: Feeder Preschools?

Description

Here's a recent question from one of our blog readers:

Question: Do you believe it really matters where a child goes to preschool when it comes to applying to private elementary school? I am making myself crazy about choosing and getting into the right preschool and would like to let go a little if it doesn't have a big effect. Thank you for taking a moment to give me your perspective.

Answer: I think your question is a good one and one that isn't asked enough by parents. It's my opinion that it does matter where your child goes to preschool if you think (or know) you want him/her to go to a private elementary school. Obviously, the most important factor is your child's happiness and well-being at preschool. But, if you want your child to go to private elementary school, some preschools have more experience helping families go through the admissions process than others. "Feeder" preschools, as they are called, send their graduates to specific private elementary schools each year. They have experience helping families go through the admissions process and they have a track record of helping kids from their preschool get in. On the other hand, if you send your child to a preschool where the majority of kids go to public elementary school, the preschool director may have very little knowledge about private admissions and may also have very few contacts with admissions directors. Furthermore, he/she may have little interest in helping guide you through the process.

That said, private elementary schools accept children from many different preschools, some "feeders", some not. I knew early on that I wanted my kids to go to private school. I picked a preschool for my daughter that I knew sent at least 50 percent of its graduates to private school. And, then when it came time to apply to schools, our director was a huge help, every step of the process. However, when your child is at a "feeder" preschool, you will be applying to schools along with other families from your preschool. It can get stressful!

I think the best thing to do is to apply to several preschools you like, some of which are the ones that you know send kids to private elementary schools. And, apply to some that are perhaps less competitive to get into and are less known as "feeder" schools. Then, you'll hopefully have options to choose from. Some of this depends on how much help you think you'll need from your preschool director to go through the admission process for elementary school. If you think you will need a lot of support, think about that when you select a preschool. There's a lot that goes on behind the

scenes between “feeder” preschools and admissions directors that can help you get into schools. For example, if your child is wait-listed, do you have a preschool director who can call admissions directors to help get your child off the wait-list. Some preschools can do this, others can’t.

Good luck with everything!

Christina

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Author

admin

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