

Reader Question: DK vs. Stay at Preschool Final Year?

Description

We received an email from one of our wonderful blog readers. She wanted to know if she should apply for Developmental Kindergarten (DK) or keep her child in preschool for one more year. Her child is happy at preschool and doesn't have to leave.

Christina's response:

This is a tough question. I have a daughter who entered The Willows School at K and a son who entered DK. My daughter was thriving at her preschool and her friends were all staying. She was not ready to leave preschool so I kept her there. My son was at a preschool where virtually all the kids were leaving and he needed to leave; if he had stayed, he would have been left with virtually no classmates his age. And, I wanted him at Willows with my daughter.

Here are a few issues for you to consider:

- The DK programs are not preschool. They are a mix between preschool and kindergarten on a bigger campus with everything that goes with being on an elementary campus (using the bathroom that is down the hall without help, possibly playing on the yard with older kids, eating lunch without help, being in a class with older kids (up to a year older) a longer day, sitting still for longer periods, etc.). Is your child ready for that?
- Secondly, DK programs have fewer spots since many of the spaces are taken by siblings. Some have only 2 or 3 spots. That said, schools need new families to enter DK for various reasons. And, if your son enters DK, the transition to K will be easier (most likely).
- What if you like a school that doesn't have a DK/Pre-K program? You will be limiting your choices to a smaller number of schools if you go the DK route. That's fine if the schools you truly like are the ones with the DK programs.
- Yes, I think turning down a spot at a school for Pre-K and then applying the next year for K is risky and very time-consuming (unless the school advises you to do that i.e. your child isn't ready for DK, but they are interested in him/her.).

- I think you are in a great situation! You can keep your child at preschool and apply to K or go the DK route. Your preschool has a very good placement record at various schools. Decisions, decisions!
- Yes, I do think developmental and progressive schools prepare the kids for the rigors of higher education. Absolutely!

***Beyond The Brochure* co-author Anne Simon's response:**

I agree with everything Christina has said, and it sounds like you are happy with your current school. I do not feel that you are putting yourself at a disadvantage by waiting until K – there are more schools to see and more spots available. I do think, however, that it might be useful to tour the PK and DK programs. You will get a head start on some of the school tours that way and you might find something fantastic that would pull you toward it. You don't have to apply if you tour, and it is time you will spend anyway in a year probably.

Good luck and thanks for your support for BTB.

Anne Simon is the co-author of Beyond The Brochure. She is the former head of Wildwood Elementary School and the former dean of the Crossroads Middle School where her daughter, a veterinarian, is an alum.

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