

Reader Question: What If My Child Has A Complete Meltdown During Visiting Day At L.A. Private Elementary Schools?

Description



Here's a question that was posted in the "comments" section from one of our readers:

Question: Hello: It's been great reading your blog in preparation for three parent interviews and three school "playdates" in the coming week. As I try not to obsess, I do have a real concern: although my daughter is joyfully happy at her preschool and no longer has ANY problems separating from us, she is STILL a very cautious (or sometimes called SHY) in new situations and the mere mention of visiting a school has her yelling "no!"

I am sure these schools are used to some kids acclimating quicker than others, but what if your child simply refuses to separate? Or has a complete meltdown in the process? My preschool will attest to what a great kid she is to have at their school, and how it's not an issue any more, but what if they don't see that at the visit? Do schools really judge your child on this ONE day?

Sincerely, Anonymous and Nerve-wracked and hoping to get through the week without a stroke, (and thankful for any words of wisdom).

Answer: Hi Anon, thanks for reading the blog! In my experience taking my daughter on visiting days or "playdates," I found that all of the schools were very skilled in helping kids separate from their parents. My co-author, Porcha Dodson, did admissions testing at Curtis School and often tells parents that the people working with the kids on these "playdates" are teachers and administrators who are very used to dealing patiently and kindly with young kids in a new environment. If your daughter is hesitant, they will most likely gently encourage her and make it fun for her. If she truly refuses to separate from you, the school may offer you another chance to come back on a different day. Overall, I think the schools do a wonderful job making the kids feel as comfortable as possible. Hopefully, your daughter will be excited about the opportunity to see a K class and potential new classmates and fun things to do! I told my daughter (who was very shy) that she'd be going to see real K classes and teachers and do a bunch of K projects. She loved it and had no trouble on these "playdates."

Anne Simon, *Beyond The Brochure* co-author, advises that you talk to your daughter and reassure her that she will be fine during the "playdate." And, you may need to stay close if the school tries to separate you from your daughter for the observation i.e. right outside the door, etc. Anne adds, "I would tell her to use her judgement about talking with the Admissions Director about separation. If she thinks she can avoid a total meltdown by staying close, she may want to say something to the Admissions Director." Hope that helps!

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