

Our Preschool Director: Private School Admissions Is Part Of Her Job

Description

If you've read *Beyond The Brochure*, you know that my daughter attended Montessori Shir-Hashirim, a wonderful preschool near the Hollywood Hills. One of the reasons I picked the school was because I knew that the director, Elena Cielak, had years of experience helping families get into top private elementary schools. When it came time to apply, she served as an enormous wealth of information, a calm presence during a stormy season and a guiding hand throughout our school application process. She has many of the top admissions directors on her speed dial and is well-respected across the city at top schools.

Here's how she helped us from the beginning of our school search to the very end:

- Suggested excellent schools for us to tour
- Asked me what I thought of each school after I visited the school
- Met with me for more than an hour to discuss our application strategy (where to apply, how to get started with the written application, what my daughter would need to know for visiting days, etc.)
- Helped me narrow the list of schools where we'd apply (She felt strongly we should apply to one particular school, but I didn't think it was right for us so we didn't apply)
- She did NOT review our written applications, but did tell me they were very important
- Met with me after our terrible parent interview and agreed we should withdraw our application
- Advised me when to call admissions directors to say "thank you" and also when to call one school to say it was our "first choice"
- Believed strongly that our daughter would get into several good schools
- Spoke to admissions directors about our daughter and advocated for her
- Reassured me when I was *panicked* about the sheer number of applicants for so few spots
- Helped us decide which school to pick (The Willows). How? She knew our family and our daughter extremely well. She told us our daughter would do well at The Willows and the specific reasons why.

Elena was doing her job, which is to help families at her school get into private elementary schools. She's good at her job and loves doing it. She really sets the standard for how a preschool director can make a difference for a family's application process. You can visit the school's website at, <http://www.montessorihollywood.org/>

If you find your preschool director is trying too hard to "steer" you towards schools you don't want to tour or is pushing you to choose a school from your options that isn't your top choice, understand that she/he is running a business. The preschool director may have multiple families they

are trying to place at the same schools and may be doing a lot of behind-the-scenes work to make sure every family at their preschool gets into a private school and that no family is wait-listed or declined. That said, itâ€™s YOUR choice. Take the advice, but itâ€™s your decision and youâ€™ll have to be happy at your new school long after your child leaves preschool.

Category

1. Beyond The Brochure

Tags

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Date Created

June 30, 2010

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