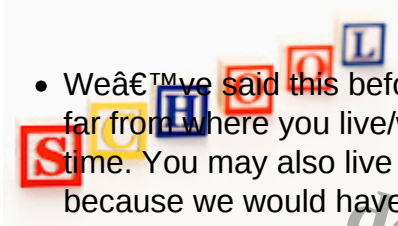


Good News! How to Choose?

Description

If you're lucky enough that your child has been accepted at several schools, you may be having trouble deciding which school to choose. This is especially true if the schools are very different. Or, if there are two schools that seem very much alike, it might be hard equally difficult to make a decision about which one would be best for your child. A few things to keep in mind:

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- We've said this before and it's worth saying again. **Location matters.** If the school is too far from where you live/work, you'll have a very difficult time and begin to resent the drive time. You may also live very far away from the other families at the school. I declined one school because we would have been the ONLY family on our side of town at the school. Parents leave schools because a commute of more than an hour each way takes its toll on the whole family.
 - The type of school and its culture should fit your family's attitudes about education and parenting and even life in general. If you're a left of center, progressive parent who endorsed attachment parenting with your infant, do you really think you'll be happy with your child at a school where the parents prepare their daughters to become debutantes and the annual fundraiser is a golf extravaganza with a tradition that dates back 75 years? If the parents at the school seem more like "Real Housewives" and that's not who you are, take note.
 - Talk to parents at the school to find out what the culture of the school is really like. I have a friend who enrolled her son in a parochial school in the Valley that she found to be way too conservative for her family. She wears skinny jeans, hip jewelry and high heeled boots and the other moms stared at her every morning at drop off like was from another planet. After changing the way she dressed for morning drop off, she realized it wasn't working. She didn't fit in. The other families were much more traditional. Her family is leaving the school for a less traditional parochial school in the heart of LA.
 - Can you afford the [tuition](#) for the entire time your child will be at the school? There can be significant differences in the tuition among some private schools and you need to be realistic about [ALL the expenses of private school](#); tuition is just the largest expense, but there are other costs (annual giving, hot lunch, summer camp, enrichment activities and more). That \$5,000 differential between schools could be put towards non-tuition education costs.
 - Is the school diverse enough for your family? Whether you're a minority family or not, you may want to send your child to a school that includes diverse families. Some private elementary schools are diverse, others lack any real diversity.
 - Resist the urge to send your child to the most popular school if you don't really believe it's a good fit for him/her. Long after you've lost touch with parents at your preschool, your child will be in elementary and/or middle school. It's your opinion that matters because it's your child. Tune out the chatter if it's too opinionated.

Category

1. Beyond The Brochure

Tags

1. choosing the right private school
2. Culture of private school
3. selecting the right school
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