

Reader Question: How Do I Know If I Selected The Right Private Elementary School?

Description



One of our wonderful blog readers emailed me with a question about picking the right school. This question is personal for me because I often wonder if I made a mistake with our previous school. See my conclusion below. â€œChristina

Question: Itâ€™s been a long week of intense debate, extreme list and spreadsheet making and we finally selected a school. The school we didnâ€™t choose seemed pretentious, but it had a lot to offer. We picked the school that also offers a lot, but where we think the parents are â€œour people.â€• Now, I feel some remorse (and regret?) with our decision. How do I know if I picked the right school?

Answer: Selecting a school for your kid can be filled with uncertainty (it was for me!). Second-guessing your decision, doubts, lingering thoughts about â€œwhat ifâ€• may persist until you just decide to embrace your decision and forget about the other school.

Let me just say that youâ€™ll never be able to answer the question fully until your child is a student at your school and some time has passed. Then, most likely, it will become â€œyour schoolâ€• and the fleeting doubts will be a distant memory. Transitions to a new school are usually uneventful, but for some kids it can be a bumpy few months. So, try to resist judging the school until your family is settled

there. Then, if your intuition tells you something isn't right or if your child isn't happy, you can try to figure out what's really going on.

Unfortunately, I have frequent regrets about selecting The Willows Community School where my kids were generally happy, but Barry and I were not. *Why did we spend so many years there?* I know I need to put this chapter behind me. For various reasons, my family didn't fit in at The Willows like we do at [Viewpoint](#).

My decisions for selecting the Willows weren't entirely flawed. For elementary school, I wanted a progressive/developmental school with [excellent teachers](#) and a small, nurturing environment with all the bells and whistles. The Willows is all that. It was the wrong school for our family for completely subjective, not objective reasons. The problem for us wasn't something I could point to on a school brochure or during a tour. [The culture of the school wasn't right for us](#). We didn't fit the very specific culture of the school. The more I [volunteered](#) and tried to make the fit work, the worse it got. Contributing to the school, both financially and with our free time was a wasted effort. I watched great families in a similar situation leave the school in first grade and second grade. We stayed. Every year I hoped something would change. It never did. In retrospect, I realized the priorities of the school administration, the board and many of the parents were far different than ours. However, if we hadn't stayed at Willows, we probably wouldn't be at [Viewpoint School now](#). Of course, I find myself thinking, *I wish my kids had started kindergarten at Viewpoint!* But, in the end everything worked out better than I could have imagined. Isn't that how life works?

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1. Beyond The Brochure

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1. Choosing The Right Private Elementary School
2. Los Angeles Private Elementary Schools
3. Private Elementary Schools
4. The Willows Community School
5. Viewpoint School

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