

Q and A With Devra Weltman Harris, Educational Consultant and Parent Educator

Description



Devra Weltman Harris

I recently had a very enjoyable lunch with Devra Weltman Harris at Le Pain Quotodien on Larchmont. We had a great time, chatting about everything from schools to parenting to our respective neighborhoods (she lives in the Los Feliz area). Devra is friendly and knowledgeable, with an expertise in helping families who are relocating to L.A. as well as private and public school placement here in L.A.

Below is my Q & A with Devra. I think youâ€™ll find her answers very useful!

Question: *You have a wide range of experience helping families navigate both public and private school admissions in Los Angeles. Can you tell us a bit about the services you offer to clients who are looking for a private elementary school?*

Answer: I offer my clients a variety of services depending on what they need and where they are in the process of their search for an elementary school. In some instances, parents come to me and they have already done a significant amount of legwork and they just want a little guidance and moral support. Other of my clients have not even begun with the process and it may be that they donâ€™t know how or where to begin. In either case, I strive to offer information and understanding. I always try

to educate parents so they can make the best possible decision for their family. Having been trained as a counselor, I offer a general sensitivity to the seriousness of the decision the family is about to make.

Question: *There is a lot of anxiety about the kindergarten admissions process in L.A. What is your opinion about why this is such a stressful process?*

Answer: I believe this is a stressful process for many parents because it is one of the first really big decisions they make on behalf of their child. We feel that we know our children, certainly, but there are aspects we might not be so sure about because they are still so young. For example, you may think you have a very artistic child and you look for a school that is strong in the arts, but the next year your child tends toward great athletic potential. Much of the stress comes from really wanting to put your child in an environment where they will thrive. I think it is important for parents to remember that school is only part of the development process, and that if your child should suddenly become interested in some other avocation, there are many ways to fulfill that interest outside of school.

Question: *Do you have a favorite success story you'd like to share?*

Answer: It may sound cliché, but what really satisfies me is when any of my clients are happy with the outcome of their search. I am partial to the preschool and elementary school parents – it is all so new and I love to see how excited they can get.

Question: *Why is it so important for families to apply to more than one school?*

Answer: This is a great question, and I feel very strongly that families should indeed apply to more than one school. First, for the obvious reason that it's crucial to have a back-up plan, even if one particular school is favored. Also, I have observed frequently that parents can change their minds about a school as they go through the process. A school that initially appears to be a great match for a child may, over time, feel like less than a perfect fit. A great deal of knowledge about a school environment is attained simply by going through the admissions procedure. It becomes evident what is important to the family and to the child, and how that is reflected by the process. This is critical and I encourage parents to embrace it fully.

Question: *Are there any admissions and/or financial aid trends you're expecting to see for 2013-14?*

Answer: Admissions trends are very hard to predict. In terms of financial aid I believe it's getting more difficult for families to receive that assistance. This may be due to an increased demand based on the current economy. I feel it is more important to look at schools that fit into your families' budget than to pursue a school that can only be attended if financial aid is awarded. No parent should feel guilty about considering cost when choosing a school. Just as one would consider class size, location, teaching philosophies – cost is another element to think about.

Devra Weltman Harris is an expert in early childhood and parenting, specializing in families with children of preschool and elementary school age. Devra holds a Bachelors of Arts degree in psychology from UCLA and a Master degree in Counseling from Loyola Marymount University and has over fifteen years experience as an Elementary School Counselor in the Los Angeles Unified School District, where she dealt with and solved a wide range of childhood and parenting problems. She currently serves as a consultant for School Choice International. To contact Devra, contact her at 323-664-4267 or email her at dweltman@sbcglobal.net

Category

1. Beyond The Brochure

Tags

1. Devra Weltman Harris
2. Educational Consultant
3. Private School Consultant

Date Created

May 2, 2013

Author

admin