

Public vs. Private School: Public Debate or Family Decision?

Description

Recently, I saw a comment on a popular LA mom blog which read:

“I have looked at several public schools, and mentally I am having such a hard time with the idea of my child attending for kindergarten, all of them look like cement-and-chain-link fence prisons. What do you guys think? Will my child be emotionally scarred by the sheer ugliness of those places?”

The responses to this mom’s comment ranged from openly hostile to supportive. I didn’t comment. Sarah Maizes, LA mom and writer of the hilarious blog, [Mommy Lite](#), did leave the following comment:

“Yes. Yes it will, and while you’re at it, you should also avoid pictures of hungry children.”

She went on to blog about the fallout from her comment the next day (see her post *“Fresh Picked Fight”* 7/12/10).

As some of you know, I have never attended private school. I’m a product of LAUSD, Santa Monica Unified, UC Berkeley and UCLA. My elementary school, Topanga Elementary, was idyllic. Hidden away in the hills of the canyon and shaded with beautiful trees. My university and graduate school were also quite spectacular public schools.

You’ll also notice that we do not criticize public schools on this blog. Like you, we’re well aware of the very public problems LAUSD struggles with. We also know that within LAUSD there are some very good schools. One of my oldest friends is on the LAUSD School Board working hard to make things better. Obviously, her children attend public school. And, private school is simply not a financial option for many families.

Private schools aren’t perfect either. The problems may be different (or maybe not), but they do exist. Toxic parents, bullies and other issues are common at private schools. We’ve written about some of these issues on this blog (see *“Kindergarten And The Bully”* 7/2/10). Quite frankly, some of the private elementary school campuses are downright *depressing*. They definitely won’t make you Ohh and Aah! One school I toured made me want to run the opposite direction because it was so run down and in need of serious repairs.

Rather than have an explosive public vs. private debate or shouting match online, we think the decision about where to send your child is personal and for your family. You may be open to public OR private school when your child is still in preschool. Look at all your options!

The public school vs. private school debate is really only of interest to us on this blog to the extent that parents want to figure out how to transfer from public school to private school and to learn more about how to get into private elementary schools. And, we try to paint a real picture of what life is like at private elementary schools, and, no, it’s not perfect.

Even within private school parents, debate goes on about which is better, a traditional or developmental or progressive school (this is code for which school will help your child get into Harvard-Westlake and then an Ivy League college).

Choosing a school is such a personal family decision that we want to make sure parents have as many options available to them as possible. The difficulty of getting into private elementary schools in LA is what motivated us to write *Beyond The Brochure* and create this blog. The more information, the better!

Category

1. Beyond The Brochure

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