

Reader Question: How Do Parents Deal With "Gap" Year When Public Schools End At 5th Grade and Most Private Middle Schools Start At 7th Grade?

Description

We pulled this reader question from our April 8, 2010 post, "Your Family's Key Messages". In case you missed this in the comments section!

Anonymous said:

I just discovered your blog and find it enormously informative and helpful. I am trying to decide if we should start our daughter in private K or for middle school. I am finding that many LAUSD elementary schools end in 5th grade while private schools have major entry points in 7th grade. Are there other schools that accept students for 6th grade? How do other making the switch to private for middle school deal with the gap year?

June 10, 2010 8:34 AM

Christina Simon said:

Dear Anonymous, thanks for reading our blog! We love writing it!

Your question brings up an issue lots of LA parents deal with. Here are my thoughts. If you start in public kindergarten, you will need to find a school for 6th grade, since public schools are K-5. Then, if you decide to move your child again for 7th grade, that could be 3 schools in 3 years. That's a lot of transition! just something to think about.

Or, you could move your child to a private school that has a 6-12 or a 6-8th grade and create more stability for your child. Kids get admitted to private school from public schools regularly. Private schools are very well aware of the "gap" problem and tend to be understanding of it, if they have space.

Some private schools DO except students for 6th grade, Brentwood and Crossroads are two that I believe accept applications for 6th grade. At other schools, there are less spots, as I understand it for 6th grade. However, it can be done. Generally, points of entry are K, 3rd (limited spots), 7th, 9th (limited spots).

The "gap year" issue is a tough one for everyone. It's something that certainly can be handled, it will just require some time and effort to plan ahead, knowing it's coming up ahead for your child. You could also leave public school for 3rd grade, 5th grade, etc. Sometimes, this is a smart strategy that a lot of parents use. Openings occur every year in every grade, it's just a question of numbers. If you prepare in advance, you will find a spot, I'm sure. Just remember, like kindergarten, you'll need to apply to several schools, not just one. And, there is an exam your child will need to take to get into private middle school.

One last point. A very savvy educational consultant told me recently she tells her clients that if they have a "gap" year to go to public school for a year and then apply to private for 7th, since private schools don't like to "poach" students from other private schools. In other words, if you go to a private for one year and then apply out to another private right away, that can be tricky, for the reason called "poaching". Interesting advice.

Hope that helps!!! Good luck!- Christina

June 10, 2010 8:58 AM

Anonymous said:

Thanks again for this helpful advice!

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Date Created

July 6, 2010

Author

admin