

Choosing A Preschool: 5 Things That Matter and 5 That Probably Donâ€™t by Mommy Poppins

Description



Sunshine Preschool in Brentwood has a reputation as a strong “feeder preschool” to John Thorne Elementary School in Brentwood. Sunshine

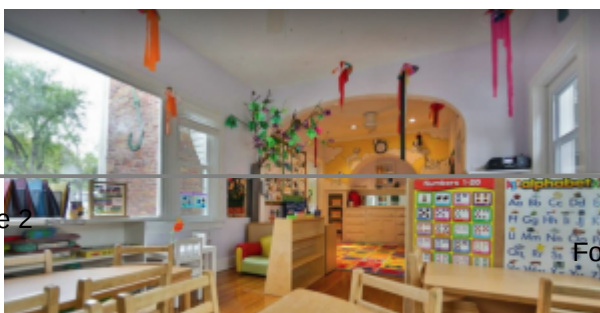
Hereâ€™s a [super-helpful article in Mommy Poppins](#) by Jacqueline Stanbury about choosing a preschool in L.A. I sent my kids to two different preschools. My daughter went to an expensive preschool ([Montessori Shir-Hashirim](#)) with celebrities and all the extras like Chinese, theater and piano lessons. It is a “feeder preschool” to several schools where I knew weâ€™d apply for my daughter (Oakwood, Willows). It is also feeds to schools like Laurence, Center For Early Education and Mirman where we didnâ€™t apply. My daughter flourished there and attended Willows for K-6. Sheâ€™s now in 10th grade at Viewpoint in Calabasas.

My son attended a local neighborhood school that has since closed. I found it through a friend who sent her son there. It wasnâ€™t fancy and cost about half the price of my daughterâ€™s school. It had great teachers, a shabby exterior, hot lunch and a willingness to play football in the yard with him before pickup. He loved it. He was the only kid who attended private elementary school from that preschool and thatâ€™s because his sister was already at The Willows. If Iâ€™d wanted him to go to a different private school, the preschool director wouldnâ€™t have been able to help at all.

I will say that Stanbury makes an important point about preschools that feed to specific elementary schools. She says, *“Those of us who make the mistake of applying only to preschools that feed into one of Los Angelesâ€™ many prestigious elementary programs can too easily get caught up in seeking approval from the director to secure a kindergarten slot.”* However, I think these [“feeder preschools”](#) can be important if you want your child to attend a specific, competitive private elementary school.

Thereâ€™s a clear path from certain preschools to a few of the same elementary schools every year. By sending their kids to “feeder preschools” parents hope to increase their chances of getting into schools like John Thomas Dye, Curtis, Brentwood, Carthorp and others. Attending a “feeder” isnâ€™t a guarantee into specific schools, but itâ€™s a good place to start (if you can get in) and it makes it a lot easier than applying from a preschool John Thomas Dye has never heard of “good luck with that! Certain hard-to-get-into-private elementary schools admit high numbers of kids from “feeder preschools” and youâ€™ll have to decide if thatâ€™s the route you want to go. There are politics involved in elementary school admissions and reasons as to why they choose kids from preschools they know and have worked with for years. Relationships exist between the preschool director and elementary school admission director. A single phone call can smooth the way for your kid to get in. A blow-up with the preschool director can ruin everything. Your relationship with your preschool director canâ€™t be underestimated when it comes time for your kids to apply to kindergarten. And, expect that the preschool director will wield power when it comes to *where* your kid should attend elementary school. If you have your heart set on one school, but the director thinks itâ€™s not the right school for your child, youâ€™ll be in a difficult position and thatâ€™s where your negotiating skills will be required. Also be aware that your child will be competing for a few kindergarten spots with his/her classmates. It all depends on what youâ€™re looking for in a school. “Feeder Preschools” are one option, but certainly not the only preschool option! As the author points out, and I agree, a small, low-key neighborhood school can be just the right place for your child too.

[Click to read Choosing A Preschool 5 Things That Matter and 5 That Probably Donâ€™t](#)



Sunshine Preschool in Brentwood. Photo:
Sunshine

Here's more about Beyond The Brochure's thoughts on "feeder schools" as we explore how it works and some of the benefits and drawbacks:

You'll note that when we talk about "feeder" schools (preschools that send more than a few students to particular elementary schools every year) we put the term "feeder" in quotation marks. We use quotes because there is some disagreement within the private school community about whether "feeder" schools even exist. We think they do. But, some private school administrators, preschool directors and even some parents don't buy into the idea of a "feeder" school. They argue that even if a school is termed a "feeder" school for a certain elementary school, there is *no guarantee that any specific child will get into that school*. They also believe that to call a preschool a "feeder" diminishes the hard work of the preschool staff and the students who are accepted to the elementary school that receives the "feeder" preschool's kids. In other words, saying a preschool is a "feeder" implies that it operates primarily on its relationship and connections with an elementary school and not much more.

Those are definitely valid points. We do think "feeder" schools develop based on relationships and connections between schools, but also because a particular preschool fits the educational philosophy of a specific elementary school. And, the elementary school probably has success with students and parents from that preschool.

We simply believe that if you look at certain preschools and the number of students they send each year to certain elementary schools, they fit our definition of "feeder" school. If a preschool sends 1/3 or more of its class to the same elementary school year after year, that's what we'd call a "feeder" preschool. We think this is helpful information when you're in the application process. It can give you important information about your child's preschool and about the preschool director's ability to help you place your child. But, don't enroll your child in a "feeder" preschool just because you want your child to attend a certain elementary school. That's not enough of a reason to pick a preschool-and things might not work out as you planned. You need to really love your preschool and if it's a "feeder" to a great private elementary school, all the better. See our previous posts for more about which preschools are known as "feeder" schools. This term also applies to elementary schools that send significant numbers of kids to upper schools.

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