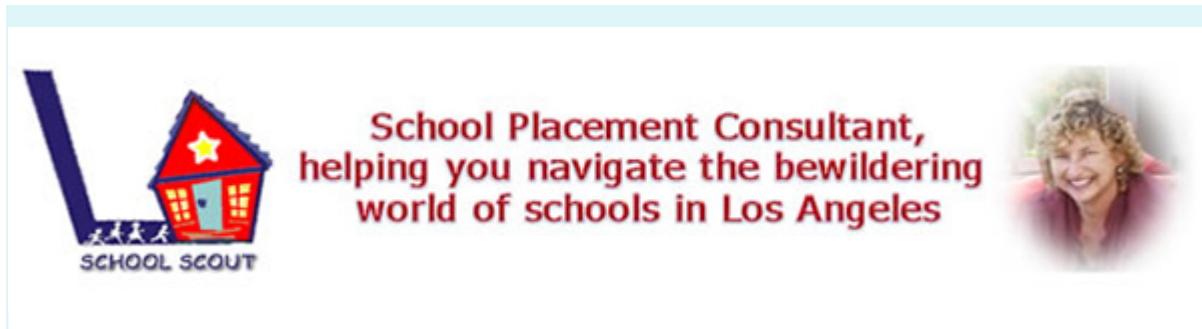


Who Is This Child You™re Describing? by Sandy Eiges, LA School Scout

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## WHO IS THIS CHILD YOU’RE DESCRIBING?

or

### What you need to know about private school applications

Once your child is entering middle or high school, you pretty much know what kind of learner they are, how they function in the classroom, their verifiable strengths and their ongoing challenges.

So when it comes to private school applications for middle and high school, most parents are in fairly good shape. Besides, your child actually has a major role in the process, including a written essay, an entrance exam, an interview. There is little mystery about who the admissions team will meet. They will meet the student described in all the paperwork. The parent essays, once so daunting, also tend to be short and to the point, realistic, true.

Kindergarten applications, on the other hand, are a whole ‘nother animal. It goes without saying that every child is brilliant, talented, clever, funny. I have known enough children to know that this is absolutely true.

For those of you with go-along, get-along children, this isn’t for you. But for those of you with children who have any challenges ‘ emotional, social, cognitive, fine motor, gross motor ‘ you should know that your view of your child may or may not be what someone else sees.

I’ve observed a 4- year old described as creative, articulate, a leader, who in fact was one of the most poised, competent, verbal, articulate, self-possessed children I’ve ever had the pleasure to meet. That child’s parents knew she was smart ‘ but they didn’t think she was a genius, or ‘gifted,’ and if they did they never mentioned it.

Not so another set of parents of an almost 5-year old described in similar terms, who displayed none of those qualities in the classroom or with peers. The parents saw him as brilliant ‘ but this was a child who lived on the periphery of the classroom, did not participate in daily class activities, and had made no real friendships in three years at the school. The teachers could not verify what the parents described ‘ at all.

The admissions process is competitive, and of course you want to put your best foot forward. On the other hand, if there is a complete disconnect about what a parent believes about their child and how their school experiences them then you’re doing yourself and your child a great disservice.

The trick in answering those questions about how a particular school, or a particular type of education, suits your child, or about your child’s strengths and challenges, is to be honest about who your child is. You have one view; trust your preschool to fill in some of those details about who they are in the classroom, on the school yard, playing with others. Take what they say to heart, and describe the child your intended school is actually going to meet.

So, for example, if you have an introverted dreamy child, that’s fine ‘ but describing him or her as being the class leader is probably not going to be something anyone will see in a Kindergarten assessment playdate, or in an observation at the preschool. Describe them as who they are. Yes, they might at times display leadership qualities ‘ but is the one-time observer going to see that side of your child?

Most of you will do just fine on your applications. When in doubt ‘ tell the truth.

## Category

1. Beyond The Brochure

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