

## **TIPS TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT KINDERGARTEN SCHOOL**

Choosing a kindergarten for your child is a very important decision to make for your child. A kindergarten that matches your child's needs will create a positive and encouraging environment for the rest of your child's education. Touring the school, and speaking with teachers and other parents are all important steps to take before making your decision.

### **Study the local schools online.**

View school websites and read parents' reviews. The photos of the school will give you a look into the school grounds and classrooms. Ensure that a school's website is current; if a website is not up-to-date, it may be indicative of a problem. Narrow down your search to two to three schools for further study.

### **Find a school that matches your child's temperament.**

Understand your child's learning style when narrowing down your top choices. Some schools will have very specific teaching styles, while others will have a broader approach to learning.

If your child benefits from direct attention and communication, find a school with a curriculum that keeps the teachers involved with the work.

If your child learns better independently, there are schools that have flexible curriculum and class structures.

By ensuring that your top choices offer a curriculum that supports your child's needs, your decision process will become much easier.

**Compare locations and travel times to your home.** Remember that you may have to provide transportation or have your child ride a bus to the school every weekday, twice daily. If the school is far away, or inconvenient, you need to determine if the benefit outweighs the trouble of exhaustive travel. If the school is located far from your work, ask if they offer before and after school care so your child has a safe place with fun enrichment activities while awaiting you.

**Choose a school with a healthy student-teacher ratio.** The enrollment at an ideal school having around 30:1 student-teacher ratio will ensure that your child gets the needed amount of attention. Search for this information online when considering your top schools. or teacher assistants in each classroom.

**Speak with other parents in your neighborhood.** Other parents will be able to give you information that is not online, but spread through word of mouth. They would also connect you with programs at different schools so that you can get personally involved in school activities once you make a decision.

You can also look at social media for reviews.

### **Make appointments to tour your school**

It is very common for parents to visit schools before making their decisions, so don't hesitate. Call the school and schedule a time to visit a classroom, tour the grounds, and speak with other parents. This is an important last step before making your decision. If a school does not allow tours, the school may not be worth considering.

You may also want to schedule a visit to the school where your child comes along. That way, you can assess their reaction to the school and determine if it will be a good fit

**Observe the classroom structure.**

Are the students working and playing with different materials and one another, or is the structure too loose? You should notice that the children are working on specific projects both by themselves and with each other. Decide what the classroom structure is and whether it would be a good fit for your child.

**Notice whether or not the teacher works with individual students.**

One on one time with a teacher is very important for your child's development. It is also important that the teacher addresses and works with large groups of students at once, too. The teacher's style will be indicative of the school as a whole, so decide whether the teacher's style would be a positive one for your child.

**Decide whether there is a balance between the arts and academics.**

Observe whether children's original artwork is hanging on the walls, as this will be indicative of an art-oriented classroom. Also notice whether the teacher prioritizes numbers and the alphabet throughout the day. These are essential building blocks of a kindergarten education and if they are not plainly visible you may want to choose a different school.

Does the teacher seem to teach about animals and plants? These things are indicative of a science-oriented classroom.

**Watch the children outside for during recess.**

By observing the grounds of the school and watching students closely, decide whether you are satisfied with the safety and care of the children. There should be more than one teacher or supervisor with the children making sure they are safe.

Also, pay attention to how structured recess is. Are the kids allowed to play freely, or is it more strict and monitored, restricting their freedom.

**Decide whether the curriculum is adapted and inclusive for children with deferring academic interest in their formative years.**

For those that are ahead of the class, as well as for those who are behind, the curriculum should be adapted to fit their specific needs. Observe whether the teacher prioritizes individual student's needs or whether there is a catchall curriculum for everyone.

Adapted schedules and activities are indicative of a progressive and positive kindergarten classroom environment.

**SPEAK TO THE TEACHERS**

**Ask how the school measures progress**

. A school that measures progress by standardized testing may be too formal for a kindergarten classroom. If the teacher you are observing composes the children's work in portfolios, this may be indicative of a less formal environment. Although tests are important, a well-balanced measurement of progress will allow your child to grow and learn in a more well-rounded way. Ask how the school measures progress as a whole, for it should be a school-wide philosophy. Find out if the school offers progress reports throughout the school year.

**Speak with the Principal before you leave.**

A Principal's philosophy will teach you a lot about a specific school and the way they view education. The Principal should be warm, welcoming, provide you with as much information as you need. Ask the Principal as many questions as you can, for this is the person that should have all the answers, and will be ultimately accountable for the overall ethos of the school, and for the development of your child.