

Questions to ask myself when selecting a new school

When considering the overall school environment:

- What are some of the school's greatest accomplishments?
- What are some of the biggest challenges this school faces?
- What is your teacher/student ratio?
- What is the role of teaching assistants? Do they work with individual children, small groups or the whole class?
- Does this school have a particular educational philosophy or mission?
- What are some highlights of this school's curriculum in reading, math, science and social studies?
- Is there a community healthcare center or mental health provider in the school?
- How do you manage medication at school?
- What is this school's approach to student discipline and safety?

When considering the grade level or classroom community:

- What is the length of the school day and scheduling of art, music, gym, recess (including outdoor time) lunch, etc.?
- How do you organize homework?
- How many children would there be in my child's class?
- How does this school encourage/monitor students' progress toward meeting grade-level standards?

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When considering the Special Education environment:

- Is there a specific contact at the school who knows about Special Education resources?
- Does the school have a behavior policy?
- What behavioral techniques and plans used by the teachers and staff?

When considering the broader school community:

- How are parents involved in the life of the school?
- How does this school keep parents informed of school information and activities?
- Is there an active Parent Teacher Association (PTA)?
- What other types of parent involvement take place at this school?
- What extracurricular opportunities (sports, clubs, community service, and competitions) are available for students?
- Are all students welcome to participate in school activities?

When you tour the school observe:

- How happy do the children and school personnel seem to be?
- Do the staff you meet seem positive about your child?
- Does the school have a good atmosphere?
- Is the school itself well cared for?
- Do the staff seem to value parents?
- Is student work displayed, and does it seem appropriate for the grade level?