



Considerations When Choosing an Elementary School

As your child approaches the age to transition out of Highlands Montessori, many families begin to think ahead about what elementary school will be the best fit for their child. With so many options available, it's normal to feel uncertain about which choice will support your child's academic, social, and emotional growth. Ultimately, there is no "one-size-fits-all" answer, because every family has its own unique values, priorities, and goals for their child's education.

To help guide you in this important decision-making process, we've compiled a list of key factors and questions that can help you evaluate prospective schools and determine the best fit for your family's needs.

Initial Considerations

The first step is to identify the type of school that best aligns with your family's values and your child's needs. Ask yourself the following:

- **Public vs. Private**
- **Traditional vs. Alternative Methods of Education** (e.g. Montessori, Expeditionary, STEM, Waldorf, Open School, etc.)

Academic Considerations

The academic environment is one of the most important factors in choosing a school. Here are some questions to ask about how the school meets students' academic needs:

- **How do you meet the needs of those children who are ahead or behind academically?**
- **What supports are available for children with IEPs, identified as highly gifted and talented, etc.?**
- **How do you support different learning styles?**
- **What is your homework policy (average daily amount)?**

Social and Emotional Learning

It's important that your child thrives not just academically, but also socially and emotionally. Here are some questions to explore in this area:

- **How do you handle discipline and behavioral issues?**
What's the school's approach to discipline? Does it focus on restorative practices, conflict resolution, or positive behavior reinforcement?
- **Is there a social-emotional learning (SEL) component to the curriculum?**

Daily Schedule and Extracurricular Activities

Understanding the school's daily rhythm and available extracurricular activities will give you insight into how the school balances academic work with play, creativity, and physical activity. Here are some questions to ask:

- What is a typical daily schedule?
 - How much outside time do children get daily?
 - What type of extracurricular activities are provided both during school and outside of school hours?
 - Do children go on field trips or have other experiences?
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Technology Usage

Here are some questions to ask regarding the school's approach to technology:

- How much tech time do children have on average each day?
 - How are devices used in the classroom (e.g. research, online lessons, homework, games, free play)?
 - What types of technology does this school have (SMART boards, 3D printers, tech labs, etc.)?
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Final Thoughts

Choosing the right elementary school for your child can feel like a daunting task. It's important to take your time and carefully consider your family's needs, values, and priorities. Remember that no school is perfect, and no decision is set in stone. The goal is to find an environment where your child will thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

By asking thoughtful questions, considering the factors that matter most to you, and visiting potential schools, you'll be able to make an informed choice that sets your child on a path toward success and happiness.

As always, we are here to support you in any way we can. Don't hesitate to reach out with questions or for further guidance during this process!