

Pointers For Parents

Finding A School That Makes The Grade

(NAPSA)—Finding the right school for your children can help them succeed today and down the road.

Experts suggest that when parents consider schools, they take certain factors into account, such as the quality of teachers and classroom size, but also the involvement of other parents in school activities. You might even want to ask to sit in on a lesson to get a sense of the teaching style a particular school employs.

Many parents have looked in to independent private schools, because each of the institutions has a unique environment and educational mission. This allows families to match a child's interests and aptitudes with a school that meets his or her needs.

Families considering private school can visit the Web site of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) for a list of questions that could help them find the right fit. The site also provides timelines for admission, links to school Web sites, and contact information for admissions offices. Here's a closer look at independent private schools.

Private School Tutorial

There are approximately 2,000 independent private schools across the United States, serving more than 700,000 students from prekindergarten through high school. Some are centuries old, others just a few years old; some are progressive, others more traditional. Some have religious affiliations, while others are secular. There are day and boarding schools and coeducational, girls' and boys' schools. Each school has a unique mission statement that guides what it does.



About 700,000 children in the U.S. attend independent private schools.

Smart Planning

Affording a private school education takes some planning, and most families employ several strategies to keep the costs within reach. Some make use of tuition payment plans, which spread payments out over several months. Families may also take out loans, and most independent private schools offer need-based financial aid in the form of grants that do not need to be paid back.

The amount of aid a family receives may vary considerably from school to school. The size of its endowment, its tuition costs and its philosophy of awarding aid affect how much a school offers, so it could pay to apply for financial aid at more than one school. The financial aid officers at the individual schools under consideration are the best source of information about aid.

To learn more, visit www.nais.org/go/parents.