

Are You Deciding on Your Child's School?

If So Here Are Some Matters Worth Considering:

- 1) Is it school policy for the principal to interview the parents of each child enrolling? Will each child's teacher be allowed sufficient time in the first few weeks to discuss the needs and interests of that child, and become acquainted with any other relevant information?
- 2) What is the total enrolment of the school? How big are the classes? Are there only single classrooms, or are there some double units? Are there any multi-age groups where children can progress at their own rate, without any pressure to achieve? Will there be a choice for your child?
- 3) Is there a school policy document which would give you information about the actual school curriculum? Departmental policy is generally not in favour of homework for years 1 and 2, and only 10 minutes per night for year 3 children - does your chosen school subscribe to that policy? (Young children have been concentrating long enough after a day at school - home needs to be a place to relax).
- 4) What provision is made for children who enter school and are not yet ready for formal work? What about children who may be ahead of the rest of the group e.g. already reading? What about children who are slow learners, or have special difficulties such as health problems, hearing or speech problems? Does the school make every effort to help such children feel normal, accepted members of the group?
- 5) Does the school use written reports, or regular parent-teacher interviews? A report which points out a child's weaknesses rather than his strengths can destroy that child's confidence, and bring dismay to parents.
- 6) What input do the children have in making up the school and class rules? What is the school policy regarding persistent misbehaviour, such as bullying? Are different age-groups allowed to mix in the playground?
- 7) What about sport? Are all children allowed to take part in sports of their choice without undue competitive pressure? Competition very often is the cause of all fun being taken out of sport - fun is an essential element for your children to develop fully and happily.
- 8) What is the policy on wearing of a school uniform? Are children required to wear hats?
- 9) Are regular parent meetings held? Are these only for fund-raising, or are educational matters discussed? Are parents encouraged to speak their minds freely? Are they kept informed of new developments in education practice? What does the school do to help teachers adjust their teaching methods, where necessary, to meet new ideas?
- 10) Are parents welcome at all times in the classroom? Are they encouraged to participate in various activities? In what ways would you like to contribute to your child's school life?
- 11) What school transport is available?

We suggest that if you want information about a school, ring the Principal towards the end of the year and make an appointment. Most Principals will be very happy to answer your questions. It is to their advantage, and the children's, to have an informed, co-operative parent body.

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