

6 Keys to Choosing a School

1. Does it support your culture and values?

You need to think carefully about how the school will influence your child towards or away from valuing and practising your culture.

For example... If you are vegetarian and all the children in the school eat meat how will that affect your child? Will they feel left out and strange? Will they feel like eating meat just so they can fit in?

What kind of music do the children listen to? What kind of movies do they watch? How do they speak to their parents? Is it with respect?

Is your religion and culture valued and celebrated? Or is it considered strange?

Are there other children in the school with the same language and culture?

2. Is there a focus on character development?

Many schools try to control the children by using different behaviour management techniques. But the real test is how do the children behave when the teacher is not there. Are children trained to be self disciplined? Are they self motivated? Do they show genuine respect to others?

These are things which can be taught in the classroom, but even more powerfully, these character traits are picked up through the culture of the school. If the school has a culture of respect, responsibility and love for learning, those are the qualities your child will develop.

3. Is there deep learning?

Many schools put the emphasis on academic test results at the expense of developing the fundamental skills and habits that are most valuable in life. An over-emphasis on memorisation, tests and awards leads to a rushed, superficial concept of education.

In contrast, children should be given time to deeply engage with relevant topics they have a genuine interest in and follow them through to completion.

Children also need to have opportunities to learn in groups. This not only trains them in the skills of listening and cooperation, but also deepens their learning as they communicate and teach each other.

4. Is technology used with purpose and thought?

Many schools think that technology is a magic bullet. They think that technology should be used as much as possible from the very beginning of school.

Technology is certainly a useful tool, but we can also see how easy it is to be addicted to the screen.

We need to train children from a young age to not be slaves to technology. They need to learn to find happiness from within without needing anything external. They need to learn that they don't need the latest toy or game or clothes to be happy.

5. Is the environment uplifting?

It is hard to be peaceful and learn effectively in a concrete jungle. Children need to develop a connection and appreciation for nature. A beautiful natural setting inspires learning and understanding of natural laws.

6. Are the children experiencing happiness?

Finally, perhaps most importantly are the children happy. Unless the children are experiencing happiness it will be very hard for them to learn and develop positive relationships with others.

When children engage deeply with meaningful projects...

When they are learn in a supportive environment and culture...

When they practice being satisfied without dependence on material things....

It is natural for them to be happy.