



THE ELEMENTARY YEARS (K-6)

Choose your child's school with **CONFIDENCE**

INCLUDES
Easy to Use
Tool Kit



religious?
magnet?
home?



Which School?



public?
private?
charter?



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PUBLIC IMPACT



Step Two: Chapter 6

Your Family Needs – Overview

This downloadable PDF is an excerpt from:

Picky Parent Guide: Choose Your Child's School with CONFIDENCE

**Get all the chapters in electronic form, for free, at *PickyParent.com*, or
purchase the paperback at *Amazon.com*.**

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LIGHT'NING LIST

What To Know from Chapter 6

- ***The family characteristics most helpful for picking a school*** are organized into the ***four Fit Factors***:
 - ✓ ***What Your Child Learns*** – your family's values and needs that influence what subjects and at what level of difficulty your child should be taught.
 - ✓ ***How Your Child Learns*** – your family's values and capabilities that influence how a school should teach and interact with your child.
 - ✓ ***Social Issues*** – your desire for your child to attend school with particular students and parents, or to attend a particular school or school type.
 - ✓ ***Practical Matters*** – your family's logistical and financial needs.
- ***You can identify the elements of each Fit Factor most important for your family*** by taking time to think about and discuss your family's needs, wants, values, and capabilities.
- ***Every aspect of every Fit Factor is not important for every family.*** You must prioritize to find a school that meets your family's top needs.

Chapter 6

Psst! Yeah You – Your Family Has Needs, Too

Alison and Patrick Smithson wanted a traditional focus on the academic basics for their three children. They had recently moved from another city to a country club community. The Smithsons began to feel that this life, however relaxing for them, was isolating for their children. They wanted their children to be exposed to others from differing backgrounds and were concerned about how similar all of the children at their assigned neighborhood school appeared to be. They were a little worried about what their neighbors would think if they didn't support this school, as the neighborhood association had pushed hard to get a new school built nearby. They could afford private school if they scaled back on travel, but wanted to consider other public schools, too. Because they lived on the outskirts of their city, transportation was an issue if no busing was available. Their search revealed a traditional, back-to-basics public magnet school with much more diversity than their neighborhood school. While it was a 30 minute ride, the school bus would pick up in front of their house. Sara was accepted late in the summer before her kindergarten year. The Smithsons were thrilled.



Anthony Rockman, a widowed father of two who worked full time as a dock supervisor, wanted nothing more than for his girls to attend college. His late wife Cassandra had died of brain cancer just one semester away from finishing her accounting degree in night school. Both girls were quick learners, but he couldn't keep up with all of their school work. To him, a school that stayed on top of his girls' academic performance was a top priority. But he was just as worried about keeping them from falling in with the wrong crowd, especially without Cassie to guide them. He wanted a school with a strict code of conduct and strong moral values. In addition, a good, affordable after-school

program was a must. He was busy and tired and couldn't get much time off from work to meet with teachers, so he needed a school he could count on. He felt biased towards the Catholic school many neighborhood children attended, but wanted to consider other affordable options, too. As he looked, he was surprised at how engaged, interested and helpful the staff members at this school were. He really couldn't believe how everything that he and his girls needed seemed to fit the school, and so that is the school he chose. Almost every week, one or both girls got to go home with another family with a stay-at-home parent for an afternoon. He felt they'd joined a big family, not just a school.

What Makes Your Family Tick?

Your family life is a unique expression of who you are as “team family.” The things that make your family different from others are the things that make you a unique group of humans, bonded together by love and values. Whether you know it or not now, you most likely have very real family needs and preferences. When you get down to the business of choosing a school, you most likely will have several “ah ha” moments when your family’s needs, wants and values crystallize into a reassuring, clear picture before you. After you have considered your family’s needs for school, we think you will feel excited about being able to better put into words who you are and what you’re about as a family!

But without guidance, many parents find it difficult to express and prioritize among wants and needs, much more so to stick with their goals during the school hunt. Values. Schedules. Child care. Money. Goals for your child. Passionate feelings about what your child learns. Social concerns for your child. Concerns about your own social life. What really matters? *Which family needs should lead?*

For example, you may find yourself thinking more than one thought like these:

- “If my child comes out of school with good grades in the basics, I’ll be happy.”
- “Children are exposed to too much, too soon. I want school to reinforce our own family’s values.”
- “I am worried about how peer pressure will influence my child.”
- “I feel nervous around other parents at my child’s school. I don’t want to feel this way.”
- “I plan for my children to attend college, and I’ll do what it takes to see that it happens.”
- “My child has a lot to live up to in our high-achieving family, and I want to support his efforts to ‘be his own person.’”
- “Private school would be a financial stretch, but we’ll manage if that’s what it takes.”

- “With our crazy work schedules, we’re nervous about the transition from full-time child care to school plus afternoon care.”
- “I’ve given a lot of time and money to my alma mater – how could I not choose it for my own children!”

Sorting and prioritizing your family’s wants and needs can be confusing, just as with your child’s needs.

Questions like these – in varying combinations – are all real and important to many families. If you feel concerned about finding what your family desires in a school, your fears are not unfounded. At some point in the school hunt, most parents will stumble across at least one of these barriers to a great family–school fit:

- Uncertainty about what values you want to pass on to your child through school
- Uncertainty about what kind of education you want for your child at school
- Not knowing what a school should offer to fit your family’s needs and values
- Lack of confidence about asserting your values and needs in your school hunt
- Pressure to attend a particular school – an alma mater or local favorite
- Pressure to pony up piles of money for private school, just to show you care enough
- Uncertain finances
- Pressure from family, neighbors, friends to make a decision based on



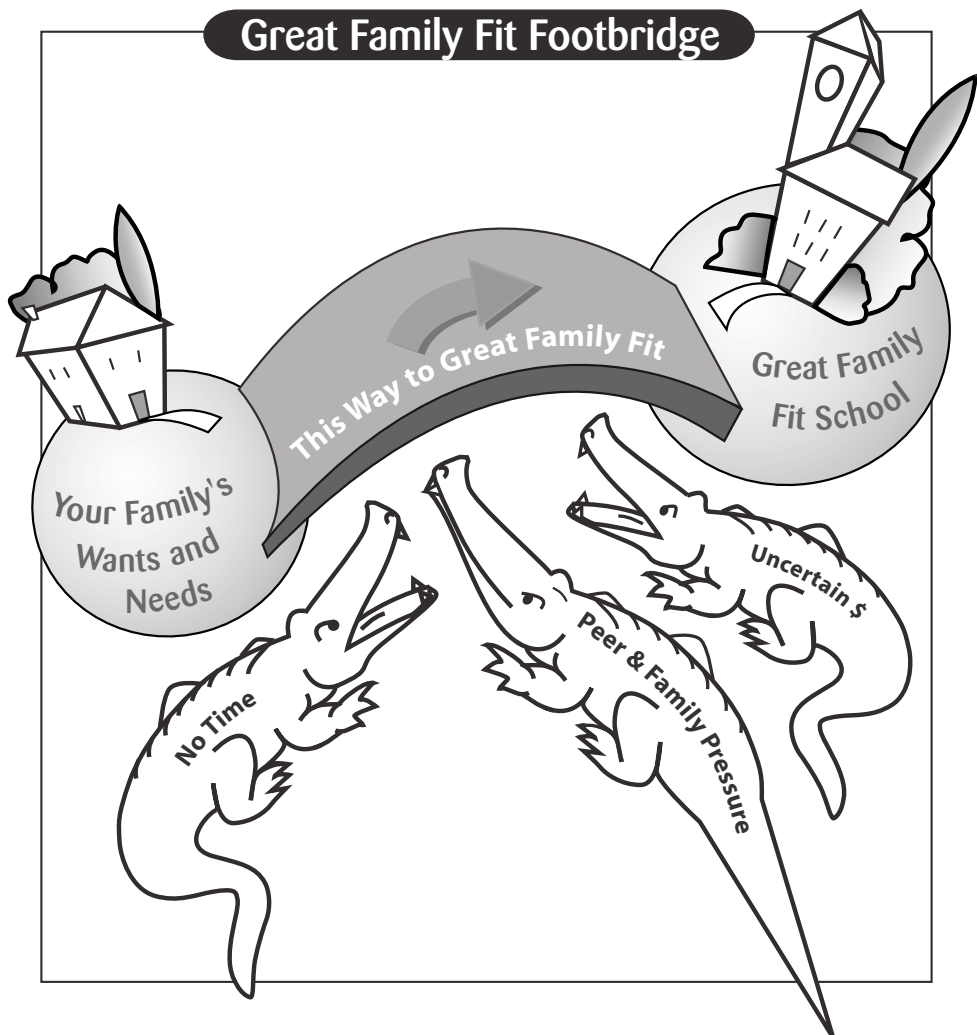
Signs of a Great Family-School Fit

If your child’s school *fits your family*, you might see some of these signs:

- You feel confident that your child is learning about important things at school
- You feel confident that your child is getting every opportunity to perform at the level of which she is capable in school
- You feel confident that your child is developing sound social, moral and ethical values
- You feel good about the teaching and learning methods used at school
- You feel good about how your child is behaving in school
- Both teachers and principal listen and respond to your satisfaction when you have a question or request
- You feel comfortable visiting and contributing time to your child’s school and being with other parents
- You feel good about what your child learns from other students and their parents
- School fits into your daily routine and yearly calendar without causing great family stress
- Your child care needs outside of school hours are met
- School fits into your budget without causing undue family stress or significantly shortening the time you spend with your child

their needs and values, not yours

Family needs are different from child needs. A huge barrier to meeting your child's needs is simply understanding what those needs are. Once you understand your child's needs, it is an accepted parental privilege that you may make choices – including a school selection – to meet those needs. In most cases, family needs are much easier than child needs to identify. But the path to choosing a school that truly meets your family's needs and reflects your values is one filled with peril. The realities of a busy life, uncertain finances, and — most of all — peer and family pressure can be treacherous and great barriers to choosing the right school.



All parents need a safe bridge to cross from knowing their own needs to choosing a Great Fit school. Even the most pragmatic of parents can face moments of confusion and feelings of defeat. The following pages and chapters will help you not only clarify your family's wants and needs, but also find confidence and courage to seek a school that fits.

Regardless of how prepared you feel right now, we say this: you are in the best position to know your family's needs and ensure that they are met, at school or elsewhere. This and the following chapters will:

- Focus you on *your* family
- Help you decide what is important for choosing a school that fits your family
- Prepare you to hunt for a school that meets more of your family's needs from the start
- Help you find a school where you'll have fewer favors to ask and fewer moments of that sinking feeling that the school just doesn't fit you and your family
- Equip you to work with your child's school to better understand and meet your family's needs
- Equip you to meet your family's needs outside of school

Your family life is a unique expression of who you are as "team family." Find courage to be the family you want to be, and make your child's education part of the package.

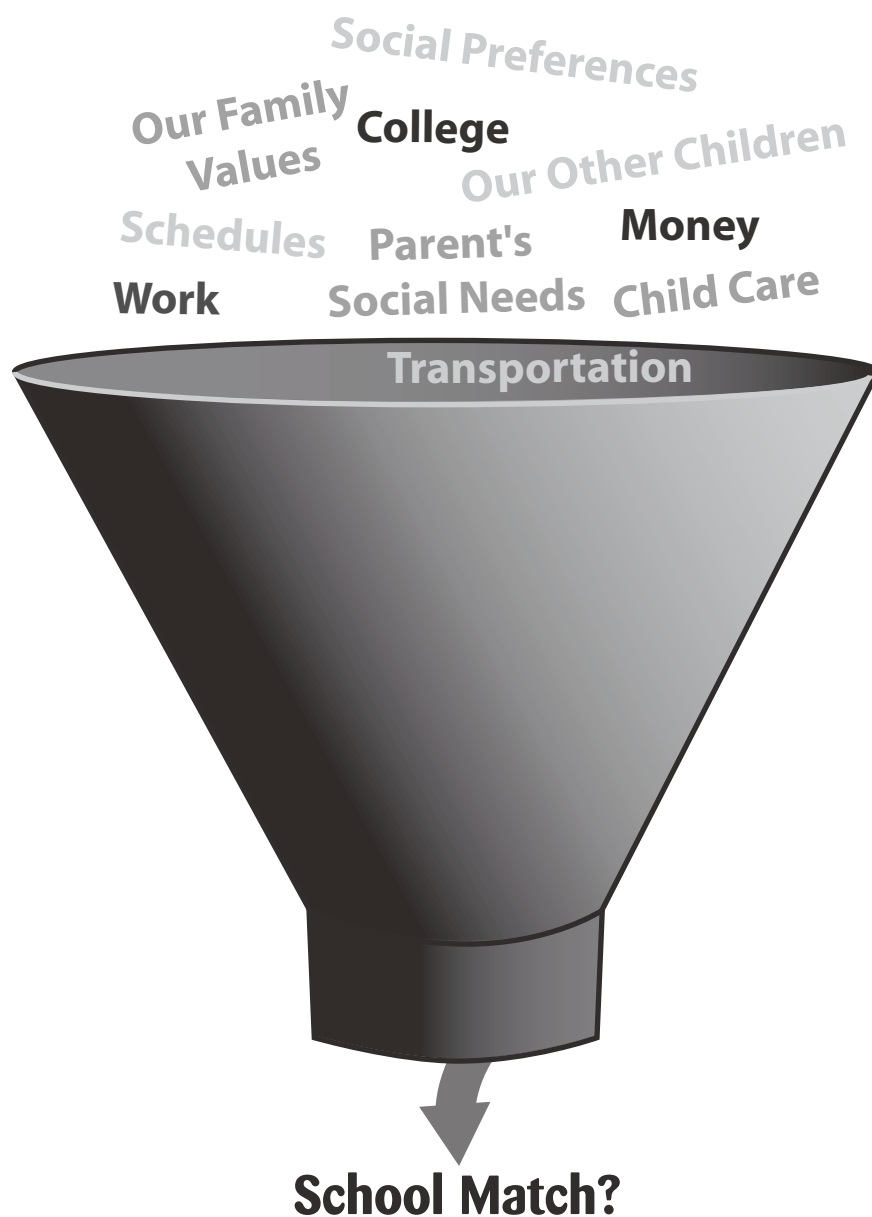


Signs of a Poor Fit Between Family and School

If your child's school is a *poor fit for your family*, you might see some of these signs:

- You worry about whether your child is learning about important things at school
- You worry that your child's school is not providing her opportunities to perform as well as she could academically
- You are worried about the social, moral or ethical values your child is developing
- You do not agree with the teaching and learning methods used at your child's school
- You are worried about how your child is behaving or the effect of other students' behavior on your child in school
- The teachers or principal do not listen well or respond to your satisfaction when you ask questions or make requests
- You feel uncomfortable or unwelcome at your child's school or with other parents there
- You are worried about what your child is learning from other students or parents
- You feel embarrassed about your child's school or very uncertain about it overall
- You often wish your child attended another school
- Your multiple children's conflicting school schedules or inadequate transportation leave you frazzled
- The extra work you must do to pay for a private school means you have little time to spend with your child during waking hours

What Matters for Matching My **Family** to a School?



The Great Fit Triangle

The big question for you now is this: which of your family's wants and needs matter most for choosing a school? Which will affect your family's life and goals greatly, and which are really low-priority afterthoughts? Which needs must be met at school, and which are better met at home and elsewhere? What will the impact be on your child and family when school is not a perfect fit with your family?

The Great Fit Triangle (page 103) shows how your family's characteristics combine with your child's and chosen school's to make a Great or not-so-Great Fit.

Focus on the Four Fit Factors

Fortunately, we can focus on a limited number of factors that determine how well a school fits a family. As we've talked to parents about their school choices, these are the issues that come up again and again, the ones that truly make a difference when it comes to finding a school that fits. We have taken all of these considerations and sorted them into four Fit Factors that parallel the issues you considered when thinking about your child. These Fit Factors are simply a way of organizing your family's many needs in a way useful for finding a school that meets them. The four Fit Factors for families are:

- **What Your Child Learns:** these are aspects of your family that affect *what subjects and at what level of difficulty* your child should be taught at school. These include your family's values about what *content* should be taught and particular *goals* you may have for your child.
- **How Your Child Learns:** these are aspects of your family that affect *how a school should teach and interact* with your child both in and outside of the classroom. These include your family's values about how children should *behave* at school, values about how children should *learn and be taught* at school (teaching method and classroom management), and your ability to *act as an advocate* for your child at school.
- **Social Issues:** these include your parental preferences about the student and parent community of a school, preferences about your own or other parents' involvement in the school, and your biases about particular schools and school types regardless of quality and other aspects of fit.
- **Practical Matters:** these include your family's needs for child care during non-school hours, daily and yearly schedule, transportation, school location, coordination of your multiple children's educations, and your financial constraints.

In the following chapters, we'll describe each of the four Fit Factors in detail. If you find that your personal fit hot buttons aren't included here, fear not. Chapter 10 will help you think for yourself to find the right school. For now, have a look at the *Family Needs Summary* on page 110.

How To Identify and Articulate Your Family's Needs

With your child, you've spent time observing and comparing, perhaps doing a bit more reading and some formal testing. Defining your family's needs is a bit different, relying less on research and testing. In large part, you'll need to do some good, clear thinking, discussing and prioritizing.

You'll start by brainstorming those things that really stand out about your family: obvious wants and needs, strengths and challenges. Use our *Family "Quick Think"* on page 109 to get you started.

Next, the following chapters will provide you with specific ideas for clarifying and organizing your family's needs using the four Fit Factors. You will need to set aside time to think, discuss, plan and put into words your family's wants and needs in more detail. Involve your spouse or parenting partner in the process, as you will need to decide jointly which needs and wants reign supreme. If you are part of a two-parent family (or both parents are involved in child-rearing decisions), then you'll need time together.

You may want to think and tinker with separate copies of the *Confident Choice Tools* for a while before comparing notes and deciding where you stand. Or you may want to sit down and hash it through together the first time. Whether planning alone or in tandem, you most certainly will need time away from your children for this. Know that you may need to have two "meetings," one to nail down the obvious things and another after you've had a chance to think a bit more and assess your financial situation. If you are raising your children alone, you will want to set aside similar quiet time for yourself to think and plan.

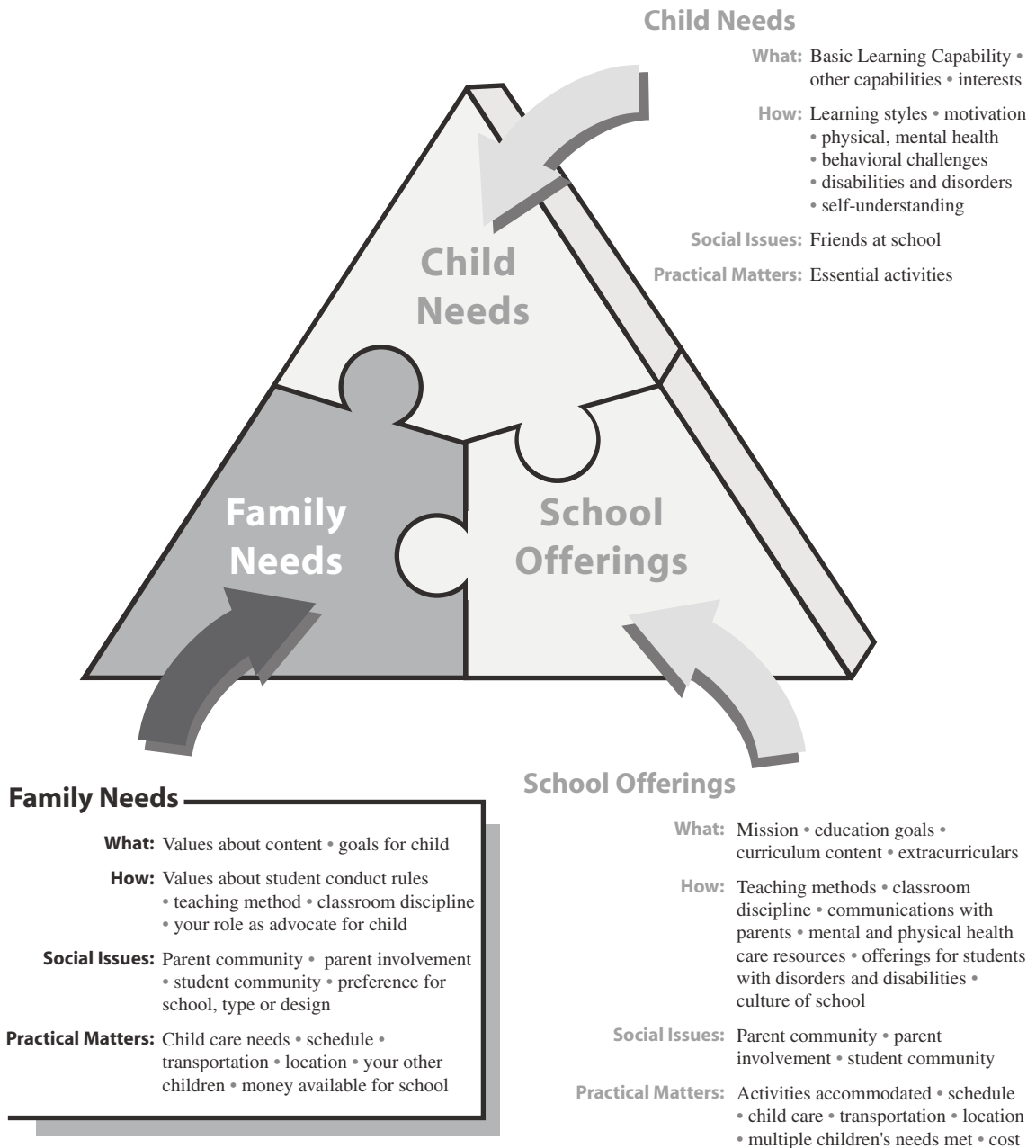
Prioritizing: Must Haves and Nice to Haves

In the following chapters, we will walk you through each of the four Fit Factor elements for families and help you identify which are most important for your own family. You will quickly see that many issues are not critical for your family, and you can avoid bogging down your school hunt by setting these aside.

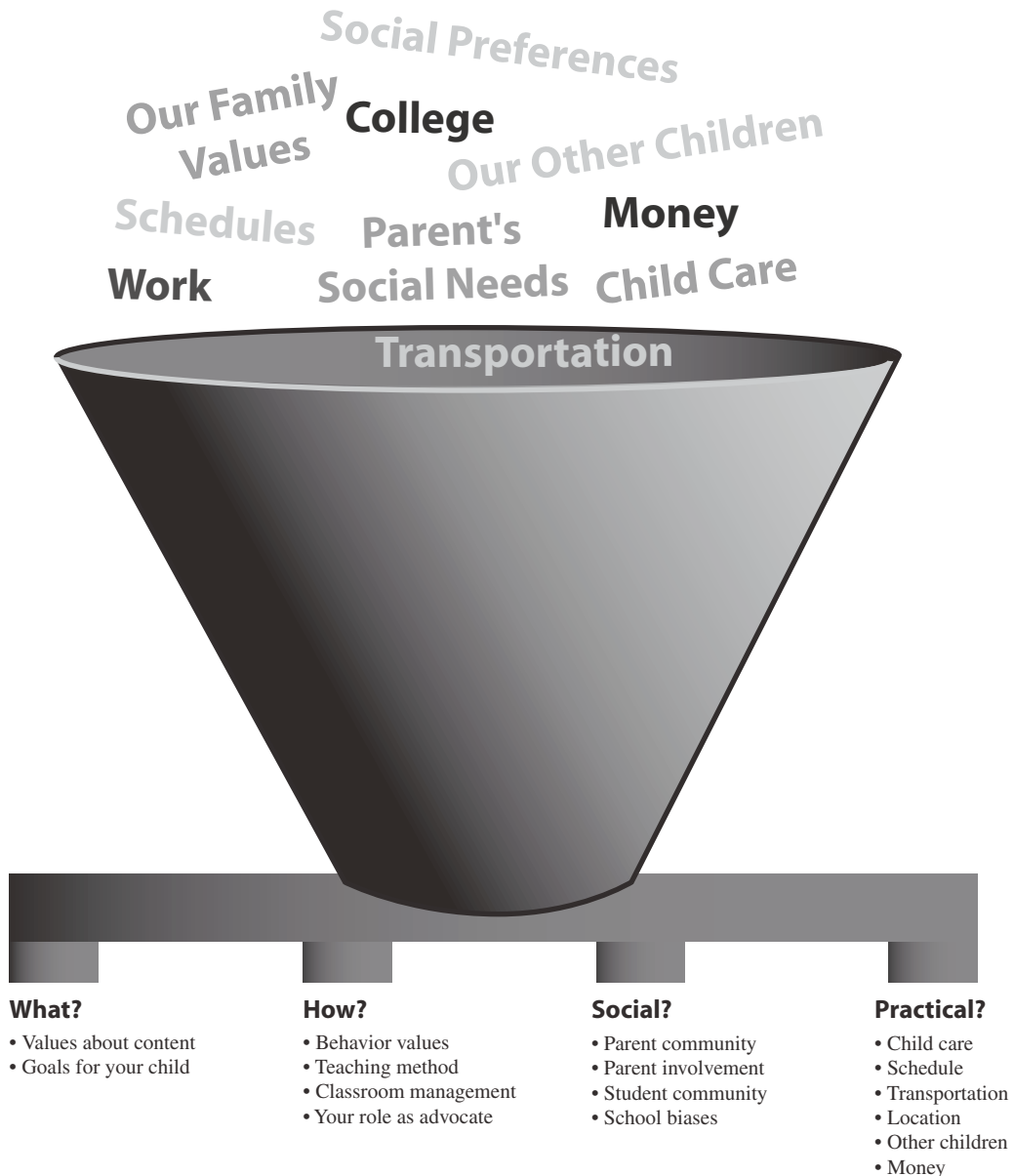
Most families will have only a small number of needs and wants that are top priorities for selecting and working with a school. These we call "Must Haves"

Great Fit Triangle

Matching Child and Family Needs with School Offerings



What Matters for Matching My Family to a School?



because your family *must have* these needs met, ideally at school. If you identify other non-essential needs – ones that aren't a top priority or that you can accommodate easily at home – consider them “Nice to Haves.” We call them this because it would be *nice to have* these needs met at school, but not really essential. Later, you can use your Nice to Haves as tiebreakers to choose between equally appealing schools. Do your work well, and this will be your prize: you can focus on finding a truly Great Fit school for your family's top needs.

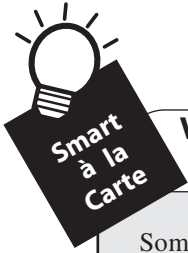


Values, Morals, Ethics and Religion: When Does School Matter More?

Religion, morals, ethics, and other values: when does school matter? For some families, finding a school that reinforces religion, morals or ethics – both in what your child learns and in the behavior that is reinforced – will be a clear Must Have. Not sure? Here's some help. If your family or child has one of the following characteristics, then you might find religious, moral or ethical education rising on your list of Must Haves:

- ***Your time with your child after school is limited,*** so that you have little chance to reinforce your family's values. If you are a single working parent or both parents are working full-time, then incorporating moral, ethical or religious teaching into weekday school may be more important. You certainly will have less opportunity to reflect on the day with your children, to guide them and to help them learn from interactions at school. If a parent is at home with children in the after-school hours, then there simply is more opportunity to share stories from the day, help children learn from their own behaviors and that of others (e.g., your child comes home with questions like “Toby used *X?!* word. Is it nice to say that?”). By dinner or bed time, the conflicts and lessons of the day will be harder for many tired children, particularly younger ones, to remember and share.
- ***You have difficulty teaching the religious, moral or ethical lessons you want your children to learn.*** You may feel ill-equipped to convey the information and behaviors you want your children to learn. You may feel uncomfortable discussing religion. Or, you may feel comfortable discussing religion, perhaps because you have a concrete Bible, Talmud, Koran or other document to back you up, but when it comes to morals, ethics and other values you feel fuzzy and not sure what to say.
- ***Your child is particularly susceptible to peer influence.*** You know your child. If she is one who quickly adopts undesirable behaviors of children around her and who rarely thinks of religious or ethical concerns on her own, then reinforcement at school may become more important.

Some families will find that their multiple needs pose conflicts. You value social connections you can get only in an expensive private school, but cannot afford one. You strongly prefer a teaching method that leaves lots of room for exploration, but logistically cannot swing that way-across-town magnet school that fits the bill. And so on. If this turns out to be you, then you will need to prioritize among your family's needs even before you get to the challenge of reconciling them with your child's needs.



Values, Morals, Ethics and Religion: When Does School Matter Less?

Some parents may feel little need for weekday school to teach or reinforce religious, moral or ethical beliefs. Many children, in fact, will learn in positive ways from observing the differing behavior and standards of other children (and teachers). Your child need not lose her moral compass from observing the behavior of others. If you've ever seen another person blow up at something you yourself were angry about, and found your anger diminished by the experience, you know that sometimes observing others' poor behavior teaches us to control our own. You may have less need for religious, moral and ethical teaching *at school* if:

- ***Your religious beliefs, morals and ethics are wound carefully into your afternoon, evening and weekend life.*** For many families, religious practices and discussion of values fit comfortably into a daily routine without taking school time. You may have a stay-at-home parent in your family, or a work schedule that leaves you the time to teach the knowledge and behaviors you want to impart to your children. If you have been a working parent who stopped working outside the home, then you know how much more influential you are able to be in this after-school time than in the nightly bedtime scramble.
- ***You feel comfortable reinforcing religious, moral or ethical teachings at home.*** You are just one of those people who feels comfortable talking with your children, or you have learned to do it despite your discomfort. Even if your time with them is quite limited, you may feel very confident about your ability to influence your children.
- ***Your child is an independent thinker who is able to withstand peer influence.*** You know your child. If he is the one calling his peers to task for their rude playground behavior or bad language (or if he notices and reflects on those behaviors with you later), you can be more confident that he will withstand peer influences that may be negative. While this is a child characteristic, it is one that should influence how important it is for your family's values to be reinforced at school.

For many parents, those things that rise to the top of the Must Have list will come down to those things that you can least well accommodate at home. You can sign your child up for ballet and soccer with the elite social set, but you cannot feasibly increase your family income to fund private school. You can keep your child's afternoon calendar clear for plenty of unstructured "imagination" time at home even if you cannot change your work schedule to cart your child ten miles to and from that magnet school. Every family brings different capabilities and constraints to the table. Be honest with yourself about your family's aspirations and requirements.

You must start with a true and clear picture of your family needs, and trust yourself to balance these with your child's needs and with your search for a good quality school. Giving short shrift to your own needs as parents, or to the impact on your other children, will only cause problems down the road. Facing up to your real needs now will help you appropriately prioritize your school-hunt efforts and ultimately find a better-fit school. Your hunt may lead you down paths you never imagined! But focusing on what's most important now – in the planning phase – will lead you where you need to go. Trust yourself as a parent, both to be honest about your own needs and to bend later if your child's needs pull you in a different direction.

Focusing on one, two or the few family needs that matter most can significantly improve your family life and your partnership with school to educate your child.



How Does a School Reinforce Values?

A school can reinforce – or call into question – your values in several ways:

- *What your child is taught*, including explicit teaching of religion, morals and ethics
- *How the school interacts with children* including general school policies (dress, honor code, disciplinary policies and expected manners), teaching methods and classroom discipline
- *The social environment*, including values and behaviors of teachers, other students and their parents

The fact that a school teaches your religion in its curriculum does not necessarily mean that your values and ethics are reflected in other school policies, the teaching method or social environment. You'll need to consider the broader school culture, not just what's taught in the classroom. Confused about what to seek? Fear not. The following family and school matching chapters will unscramble the puzzle for you. If values are an important element of schooling for your family, let your school hunt priorities reflect this. Whatever your needs, biases or preferences, it's best to recognize them now and decide how important they are to you before you start sorting through your school options.

**Smart
à la
Carte**

The Challenge of “Being Your Own Family”

Have courage to express your own family’s values and meet your own needs. Be both who you are and who you want to become as parents – even when the picture you paint of your own family is different from what your friends, neighbors, colleagues, siblings, parents or others might want it to be. Choosing a school is just one more parenting decision like the other important ones you have made already, though perhaps a bit more public one than most. You may find that even good friends are very different from you when it comes to school needs. And you may find values, needs and interests remarkably similar to people with whom you have felt very little in common previously. Many parents find that early childrearing changes adult friendships: values are put into action with discipline, manners, material goods and other choices about how to mold and shape your children. Your heightened understanding of your own and others’ values can unexpectedly bring you closer to, or drive small wedges between, you and other parents.

Don’t be deterred by fear that your family will be “different.” Let your school choice – and how you make it – be as much an individual family expression of ideals and values as all of your other crucial childrearing actions. Don’t be hoodwinked by your well-meaning acquaintances and friends when they make definitive statements of what you ought to seek in a school for your child or which schools are “the best.” They may be wrong, or they may be right for their family and very wrong for yours! Take time to articulate what you want and need as a family so that you can listen to friends and neighbors with the courage and know-how to separate your needs from theirs. Enjoy the journey of self- and family-discovery that choosing a school for your child can bring.



SNAP TO IT

What To Do

- **Use Family “Quick Think”** on the next page to brainstorm the things about your family that you think really stand out. Estimated Time: 10 minutes
- **Skim the Family Needs Summary** on page 110 to get a complete preview of the specific family wants and needs included in each of the four Fit Factors. You do not need to follow the instructions at this time. Chapters 7-9 will walk you through identifying your Must Haves and Nice to Haves. Estimated Time: 5 minutes

Need more? Want more? Got more to share? Visit PickyParent.com.

Family “Quick Think”

Stop and think for a few minutes about your family. Write your responses here or on a separate page. Compare and discuss your answers with anyone else involved in school decision-making (e.g., your spouse or other parenting partner). Keep your notes handy to use later in your school hunt.

What values, needs, strengths and challenges *stand out about your family?*

➤ Values about *what* your child should learn and achieve through school

➤ Values about *how* children should behave and learn at school

➤ How you and your child interact with the school community, socially and otherwise

➤ Your family's practical constraints (scheduling, transportation, finances, child care, your other children's schools)

Family Needs Summary

How to Use This Summary:

- Use this checklist to help identify your family's most important characteristics for choosing a school. Use Chapters 6–9 and the *Know Your Family's Needs* table on page 375 for further clarification.
- Write an "M" in the square box beside needs that are Must Haves: truly essential for your child's school to address. Most families will have a small number of Must Haves.
- Write an "N" in the square box beside other needs that are Nice to Haves: not essential, but helpful for school to address.
- Leave empty boxes beside items not important for choosing a school for your child, because either (1) an item is not important for your family or (2) you do not need *school* to address an item.
- Record Must Haves and top Nice to Haves on your *Personalized Great Fit Checklist* on page 59.

WHAT YOUR CHILD LEARNS

VALUES ABOUT WHAT CONTENT IS IMPORTANT: a Must Have if you strongly value a subject and need for school to cover it. Mark Must Haves ("M") and Nice to Haves ("N") below:

- ☐ Core academic subjects (reading, writing, math)
- ☐ Other academic subjects (foreign language, etc. – make your own list of subjects you value)
- ☐ Morals, ethics, character, religion
- ☐ Other non-academic: social, emotional and physical development
- ☐ Other topics important to you

GOALS FOR YOUR CHILD: a Must Have if one of these is your goal for your child, and your child is at risk of not meeting the goal (if goal is learning a particular subject, use *Values about content* above). Mark Must Haves ("M") and Nice to Haves ("N") below:

- ☐ Grade progression: child at risk of failing required subject or not meeting standard for grade progression
- ☐ Academic performance: child is capable of performing above grade level but at risk of not achieving potential
- ☐ College opportunity: you want child to attend college and child is capable, but child at risk of not achieving goal

HOW YOUR CHILD LEARNS

☐ **VALUES ABOUT SCHOOL-WIDE EXPECTATIONS AND RULES ON STUDENT CONDUCT:** a Must Have if you have strong opinions about school rules on children's social behavior, especially if

1. your time with your child is very limited or
2. you have difficulty teaching the religious, moral or ethical lessons you want your child to learn or
3. child is very susceptible to peer influence or
4. you are very concerned about values and behaviors your child is adopting at current school

Check expectations and rules important to you below:

- ☐ Manners with other children and adults
- ☐ Honor code
- ☐ Dress
- ☐ Discipline
- ☐ Other behaviors _____

Family Needs Summary

...continued

HOW YOUR CHILD LEARNS...continued

VALUES ABOUT HOW CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN: a Must Have if you have a strong opinion about how children should be taught and behavior managed in school

☐ **Teaching method** (check preferred method below)

- ☐ Teacher directed: teachers transmit their knowledge directly to students and guide student activities in detail
- ☐ Student discovery: teachers help students figure out new knowledge for themselves and choose own activities
- ☐ Mixed approach: some of both teacher directed and student discovery learning

☐ **Classroom behavior management** (check preferred method below)

- ☐ Controlling/Strict: teachers maintain order through clear rules, rewards and consequences
- ☐ Developmental: maintain order by coaching and developing students' self-control; use peer and parental pressure
- ☐ Mixed approach: some of both controlling/strict and developmental approaches

☐ **YOUR ROLE AS ADVOCATE FOR YOUR CHILD:** a Must Have if you have difficulty understanding and communicating your child's needs to teachers and principal (because of time constraints, lack of confidence, language barriers, cultural differences, or other reasons)

SOCIAL ISSUES

☐ **PARENT COMMUNITY:** a Must Have if you want your child's school to have parents with particular characteristics (make a list and check preferred items below)

- ☐ Friends: Parents you already know?
- ☐ Neighbors: Neighborhood parents?
- ☐ Location: Parents from a particular neighborhood other than your own?
- ☐ Values: Same values as you? Which values?
- ☐ Social behavior and manners: Ways you want, or don't want, other parents to act?
- ☐ Social and economic status: Do you have preferences about the diversity or makeup of the parent community?
- ☐ Race and ethnicity: Do you have preferences about the diversity or makeup of the parent community?

☐ **PARENT INVOLVEMENT:** a Must Have if you have a strong preference about the level and type of parent involvement in your child's school, including (check preferences, if any)

- ☐ Helping: helping with school's daily life (e.g., volunteering for classroom activities, media center, field trips)
- ☐ Decision making (e.g., volunteering as member of school advisory or governing board)
- ☐ Fundraising activities (see last item below, Money, about your own donation dollar amounts)

Family Needs Summary

...continued

SOCIAL ISSUES... continued

- ☐ **STUDENT COMMUNITY:** a Must Have if you want your child's school to have students with particular characteristics (make a list and check preferred items below)
- ☐ Friends: Want to keep your child with current friends? Seeking new friends for your child?
 - ☐ Neighbors: Your child's neighbors?
 - ☐ Location: Students from a particular neighborhood other than your own?
 - ☐ Values: Same values as you? Which values?
 - ☐ Social behavior and manners: Ways you want, or don't want, other students to act?
 - ☐ Student achievement: Higher, lower or same-performing students compared to your child?
 - ☐ Social and economic status: Preferences about the diversity or makeup of the student body?
 - ☐ Race and ethnicity: Preferences about the diversity or makeup of the student body?
 - ☐ Gender diversity: Do you want an all-boys or all-girls program for your child?
 - ☐ Other student characteristics you do or do not want?

- ☐ **I WANT MY CHILD TO ATTEND A CERTAIN SCHOOL, SCHOOL TYPE, OR SCHOOL DESIGN:** a Must Have only if you would choose a certain school type (e.g., public, private, religious) or design over a different school of better quality and fit

PRACTICAL MATTERS

- ☐ **CHILD CARE:** a Must Have if you do not have other affordable child care options for hours needed
- ☐ Before and after school
 - ☐ Holidays and Summer

- ☐ **SCHEDULE:** a Must Have if you have unchangeable commitments (e.g., work, other children's schedules) and can not use transportation or child care to accommodate a different schedule
- ☐ Daily hours
 - ☐ Yearly (start/finish and holidays)

- ☐ **TRANSPORTATION:** a Must Have if you have unchangeable commitments preventing you from providing transportation and you cannot use non-school transport (e.g., carpool, city bus)
- ☐ To school and home from school
 - ☐ After school activities

- ☐ **LOCATION:** a Must Have if you need to have your child's school near work or home (e.g., you have time or transportation constraints, or you plan to visit your child's school very frequently)

- ☐ **YOUR OTHER CHILDREN:** a Must Have if you definitely do or do not want child to go to same school as siblings. Same or different schools? _____

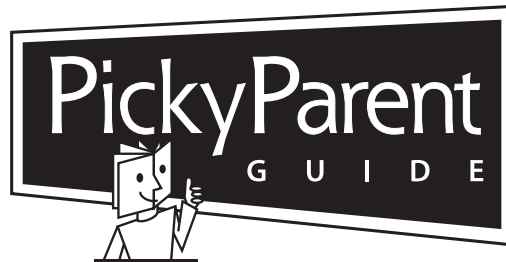
- ☐ **MONEY AVAILABLE TO PAY FOR SCHOOL:** a Must Have if money available to pay, including possible scholarships or vouchers, is less than most expensive school option

Current \$:¹ _____ Target \$:² _____ Maximum \$:³ _____

1 Current: Amount you actually spend on education now (tuition, fees, child care, supplies, gifts, donations)

2 Target: Amount you could spend without major changes in work, lifestyle or debt (may be same as Curr. or Max.)

3 Maximum: Most you are willing to spend, with acceptable changes in work, lifestyle and debt.



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