



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



Glossary, Index, Resources, and Sources

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

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Glossary

Academic: Academic, as it is used in this book, means having to do with elementary school subjects required for later functioning as an independent adult in our society. These include at least reading, writing, math, science, and social studies.

Adequate Yearly Progress: A term used in the 2001 federal No Child Left Behind legislation that refers to how much schools must increase the percentage of children achieving grade level in order to meet federal requirements. This measure does not indicate how well a school helps students learn beyond grade level goals.

Advocate: The role of parent or other influential adult to understand and communicate a child's needs to teachers and principal.

Age-Appropriate: Age-appropriate means suitable for a child of a particular age. Age-appropriate capabilities are ones that most children of a certain age have mastered. Age-appropriate education uses teaching methods and subject matter that appeal to the interests, preferences, and capabilities of most children of a certain age.

Alma Mater: A school that you attended previously. In our usage, you need not have graduated from a school for it to be your alma mater. With Latin and Greek origins, the term literally means "nourishing home" or "nourishing mother," but you may or may not have such warm feelings towards every school you attended!

Analytical Thinking: Solving problems by breaking them down into logical, orderly steps. One of the two major capabilities assessed by traditional "I.Q." tests (the other is Conceptual Thinking).

Assessment: Formal test or measurement of an individual child or school using scales of commonly accepted measures generally agreed to be important. May also refer to informal monitoring of an individual child's learning.

Auditory Learner: *See* Learning Styles

Basic Learning Capability: A child's readiness for learning in core academic subjects. Includes both your child's current mental processing abilities ("I.Q.") and your child's previous learning of core academic content. Core academic content includes subjects essential to later education and adult life in our society: at least reading, writing and math in the elementary years. Often considered an unchangeable characteristic, in fact a child's Basic Learning Capability can change significantly during the elementary years.

Before and After School Care: Care for school-age children before the formal school day begins and after the formal school day ends, often during typical parent work hours.

Behavior: Behavior includes student and staff social behavior both in and out of the classroom. Aspects of behavior include manners with other children and adults, dress, discipline and honor code.

Behavioral Challenges: *See* Challenges

Breadth: Subjects, topics, and aspects of the "whole child" beyond just core academic subjects.

Capability: The state of readiness for performance or accomplishment in a particular pursuit. In the case of Basic Learning Capability, a child's readiness to learn in core academic subjects. In other areas, such as music, art, physical and hands-on activities, creativity, and English as a Second Language, includes the relevant mental, physical, and technical skills and knowledge for each pursuit.

Certification: The licensing of prospective teachers by a state. May include passing a written exam meant to assess knowledge of education principles or other requirements.

Challenges: Physical Health, Mental Health and Behavioral:

Physical Health: Any physical restriction, handicap or ongoing illness that may prevent a child from participating fully in school life and learning or that requires daily treatment or special facilities.

Mental Health: Any ongoing or recurring emotional upset (such as depression, anxiety, or other mental health challenges) that may prevent a child from participating fully in school learning and life or that requires regular treatment or school oversight.

Behavioral: Significant, unresolved behavior or discipline problems in group settings that prevent a child or others in same class from effectively learning.

Charter School: A public school that has a "charter" or contract to educate students in exchange for receiving public education operating funds. Charter schools typically are released from many of the regulatory constraints placed on other public schools, but must achieve specified educational results to continue receiving public money.

Choice Plan: A plan within a public school district that allows parents to choose from among several schools, not just an assigned school. A choice plan may allow choice from among all schools or from among a limited number within the district.

Clear Mission Guiding School Activities: A written school plan that is used to guide all decisions about how to spend time, money and other resources in the school. The mission should clearly define why the school exists, the major guiding principles (values) of the school and whom the school will serve. All members of the school community should understand the key points and follow them in daily school activities. One of the seven Great School Quality Factors.

Conceptual Thinking: Making comparisons between things not obviously related, seeing similarities and large patterns in a collection of smaller events. One of major capabilities assessed by traditional “I.Q.” tests (the other is Analytical Thinking).

Confidence: The feeling that you can do a good job, so trying hard is worth the effort. If you read this book, you will both feel and act more confident when choosing and working with your children’s schools.

Content: The subjects, topics, skills and knowledge that a student learns or is taught at school.

Controlling Classroom Behavior Management: A method of managing students’ behavior in which teachers maintain order through clear rules, rewards and consequences. Also called “Strict.” Contrast with Developmental approach.

Core Academic Subjects: Subjects that all students must master in preparation for independent adult life and further education in our society, including at least reading, writing and math in the elementary years. Also includes science and social studies in most curriculums.

Creative Thinking: Thinking of new ideas and ways to do things, rather than imitating others or doing things the way they have been done before; may apply to varying activities.

Critical Thinking: Thinking that includes making judgments. Requires both analytical and conceptual thinking to assess logic and completeness of previous work, and in some instances creative thinking to determine alternatives not presented in previous work.

Culture: *See* School Culture.

Curriculum: The combination of learning goals (grade level and/or individualized) that define what children are supposed to learn in a school. Sometimes also refers to the materials and teaching method used to meet learning goals.

Default Destination: Our term for the school to which a parent would send a child if not making a proactive school choice.

Design: *See* School Design.

Developmental Classroom Behavior Management: A method of managing students' behavior in which teachers maintain order by coaching and developing students' self-control and using peer and parental pressure. Contrast with Controlling/Strict approach.

Differentiation: An instruction approach in which both the difficulty of material taught and the teaching methods used differ according to each individual child's current achievement level, learning styles, interests and other child characteristics. This is used as an alternative to teaching one level of skill and knowledge and using one teaching method for all children in a class. Differentiation combines Great School Quality Factor #2 (High Expectations) for children ahead of grade level and Great School Quality Factor #3 (Monitoring Progress and Adjusting Teaching) for all children. Also called "individualized instruction."

Disorders: *See* Learning Disabilities and Disorders

District School: *See* Public District School

Diversity: A school is diverse when the students or parents are different from each other in certain respects. A school may be diverse in students' academic capabilities; race; religion; gender of students; values and ethics of students and parents; family income and wealth; student and family residence; or interests of students. Different students and families may value different aspects of diversity.

Education: Education includes what a child learns and how he learns, both in school and out of school. Education includes not just academics, but also development of a child's social, emotional and physical capabilities.

Educational Goals: Individual Educational Goals are the specific skills and knowledge that a school expects an individual student to learn, either based on the child's grade level or based on the child's previous mastery. School Educational Goals are goals for average levels of achievement or progress that a school has for all students or for students in various subgroups (e.g., by race, income, or previous performance).

Elementary Schools: Schools that serve children in grades kindergarten through 5th or 6th grade.

English as Second Language: When a language other than English is spoken by a person, and a person is not already fluent in speaking, reading, writing and understanding English, and learning English is desired or required, then English is called the person's "Second Language" ("ESL"). ESL programs in schools follow varying formats. Schools vary in the amounts of time spent on English instruction, the range of subjects taught in English and the quantity of instruction in the student's first language. The long term goal of most ESL programs is for each student to understand, speak, read and write English at the level expected of same age children for whom English is the first language.

Essential Activities: The activities that a child must continue in order to address the child's compelling interests or capabilities.

Ethics and Morals: *See* Morals and Ethics

Extracurricular Activities: Activities conducted outside of the school's regular academic curriculum. May be done at school or with an unrelated group. May include traditional academic content or other areas. Examples include sports; fine arts such as drama, art, music, or dance; chess clubs; math and science clubs; book clubs; volunteer community service; and non-school religious activities. *See also* Essential Activities.

Fees: Fees are amounts of money parents pay over and above tuition to fund non-core elements of a child's education, most often at private schools. Examples include sports fees, locker fees, and field trip fees. Fees are distinct from tuition only because a school chooses to charge for them separately, often because the fee purchases an optional element of the child's experience. Inquiring about fees in advance can help you determine which ones are truly optional and which are necessary to include in your school budget.

Fit: The match between child, family and school. A Great Fit school is one that completes a particular child's education and development in ways complementing the family's values and needs. Fit, along with school quality, is one of the two major considerations for choosing the right school for a child. *See also* Fit Factors.

Fit Factors: The four areas to consider for determining how well a school fits the needs and values of a particular child and family. Each Fit Factor is comprised of specific elements for child, family and school. *See also* definitions of the individual factors: What Your Child Learns, How Your Child Learns, Social Issues, and Practical Matters.

Focus on Effective Learning Tasks: The multi-task process of ensuring that students' school learning time is focused effectively on the work of learning. Includes using well-tested teaching approaches; allocating class time, materials, and facilities in line with each subject's and topic's importance; and ensuring that class time is not interrupted. One of the seven Great School Quality Factors.

Four Fit Factors: *See* Fit Factors

Gifted: Traditionally, students who possess some combination of unusually high learning ability and unusually high performance in traditional academic areas: reading, writing, math, science, social studies, and the thinking skills that underlie each. Today, the term "gifted" may refer to children with combined unusually high learning ability and performance in other areas as well, such as music, art, athletics, social interactions and leadership.

Goals for Your Child: Goals important to a parent that the child is at risk of not meeting. Common goals influencing school choices include grade progression, academic performance at the child's full level of capability, and college opportunity.

Grade Level Standards: The specific knowledge and skills that a school expects all children to acquire and demonstrate by the end of each grade level. Grade level standards may be written as end-of-year goals only or as a series of steps spanning multiple grades and phases within each grade.

Great Fit: *See* Fit

Great Fit Triangle: Triangle picture with three puzzle-piece sections – child needs, family needs and school offerings. The Great Fit Triangle illustrates how the fit among child, family and school determines the completeness of an individual child’s education and development.

Great School: A school in which students of all abilities and types learn dramatically more than similar students in other schools. Research has consistently shown that schools meeting this definition exhibit the seven Great School Quality Factors used in this book far more often than schools producing lesser academic results with their students.

Great School Quality Factors: The seven characteristics of schools shown through repeated research to distinguish Great Schools from average ones. Great Schools are ones in which students of all abilities and types learn dramatically more than similar students in other schools. *See* Chapter 11.

Hands-On: Activities, or a person who pursues activities, requiring strength, agility, speed, balance and/or flexibility of hand muscles. Includes creating ideas or objects and solving problems using small muscles of the hand. *See also* Physical. *See also* Learning Styles: Kinesthetic/Tactile.

Health, Mental and Physical: *See* Challenges

High Expectations: Combined challenging learning goals and a consistent expectation by school staff that all students can meet the goals. Includes high minimum grade level expectations for all students, with clearly defined actions taken for students at risk of not meeting. Also includes a defined process to set higher expectations for students ready to learn beyond grade level, including clear actions to help those students meet individual goals. One of the seven Great School Quality Factors.

Home School: Formal education offered primarily in a child’s own home and guided by a child’s own parent(s). Home schooling may include multiple families collaborating for academic instruction, music, sports, art and other activities. Instruction may be done by hired tutors. Some aspects of home schooling may take place away from home, such as art and science museums, other local educational facilities, and homes of other families.

Home-School Connection: The communication between school and parents of information important for each child’s learning and development. Includes school informing parents what children will be learning, how to help at home, and how each parent’s own child is faring. Also includes school working effectively with parents to resolve problems. One of the seven Great School Quality Factors.

How Your Child Learns: One of the four Fit Factors. “How Your Child Learns” includes features of a child or family that influence how a school should teach and interact with the child, both in and out of the classroom.

Implementation: This is what schools actually do day-to-day, as opposed to what they say they will do or plan to do.

Independent School: A private, non-government school that is owned, operated and funded without control by any larger body (e.g., religious or other group).

Individualized Instruction: *See* Differentiation

Instructional Leadership: Leadership of a school. The seventh Great School Quality Factor. Includes ensuring that all staff members are focused on implementing the first six Great School Quality Factors. Specifically: maintaining clear, high expectations for teachers; recruiting and keeping great teachers; organizing teachers to work together; monitoring and improving teacher performance; and acting on high and low teacher performance (recognizing and rewarding high performers, ridding school of low performers). *See* Leadership.

Kinesthetic/Tactile Learner: *See* Learning Styles

Leadership: The capability of establishing a vision and/or goals and organizing and managing a group of people to implement the vision and goals. Term applies to both children’s capabilities (*see* Social Skills) and adults’ capabilities (*see* Instructional Leadership).

Learning Content: *See* Content

Learning Disabilities and Disorders: Disabilities and disorders are imbalances and severe challenges that may keep a child from learning and performing at the level of which the child would be capable if not for the disability or disorder. A disability is a problem with an important, basic part of your child’s physical or mental functioning that is significantly different from your child’s other capabilities or that significantly hampers your child’s learning. A disorder is a problem with an important, but not necessarily basic, part of your child’s physical or mental functioning. Both disabilities and disorders may keep a child from fully utilizing other capabilities. Both may affect academic, social, emotional and physical learning and performance. Some disabilities and disorders can be overcome entirely if detected and addressed early enough in a child’s development. The impact of most others, once diagnosed, can be lessened.

Learning Goals: The specific skills and knowledge that a school expects a child to acquire and demonstrate. Learning goals may be the grade level standards or may be determined for each individual child, particularly for children who meet or surpass grade level before the end of the school year or who are Extremely Challenged in Basic Learning Capability.

Learning Styles: Auditory, Visual and Kinesthetic/Tactile. Strengths and preferences your child has for using the senses — particularly sight, hearing/talking, and movement/touch — to absorb new information and act in a learning environment.

Visual: child learns best seeing things written or in pictures; stimulated by how things look; bothered by disorder, clutter.

Auditory: child learns best listening, talking, discussing; stimulated by sounds; bothered by loud, disorganized noises.

Kinesthetic/Tactile: child learns best by moving body; stimulated by activity; bothered by sitting still. Tactile learning is specific type of kinesthetic learning: child learns best by working with hands, including both handwriting and other activities.

Lottery: A process through which a school randomly selects students for admission. Most often used by public schools when the number of applications for admission exceeds the number of slots. Some schools hold separate lotteries for different grade levels, genders, family incomes, and other dimensions.

Magnet School: A school in a public school district that offers a special curriculum (e.g., math and science, performing arts) or teaching method. The term “magnet” is used because these schools are intended to attract students from across a district.

Mental Challenges: *See* Challenges

Mission: The purpose of the school. The mission should define why the school exists, the major guiding principles (values) of the school and whom the school will serve. Actual “mission statements” vary in completeness. A mission is necessary to guide a school in choosing its curriculum and teaching methods, both to fit the school values and to meet the needs of students attending the school.

Monitoring of Progress and Adjusting Teaching: The twin process teachers and other school staff use to assess individual students’ learning progress frequently and adjust teaching approaches to ensure that all children meet their learning goals, whether grade level or beyond. One of the seven Great School Quality Factors.

Morals and Ethics: Morals are a person’s definition of what actions, thoughts and words are right and wrong; a person’s definition may be guided or determined by a larger group (religion, family, community). The term “ethics” is often used interchangeably with “morals.” Ethics entails a specific determination of right and wrong when the moral definition is not entirely clear; such a determination often is guided by priorities about which morals carry more weight than others in certain situations.

Motivation: Your child’s internal drive to learn and perform academically. This includes setting goals, working to meet them and overcoming obstacles. While there are other motivations, this is the one used in this book to help match children with schools.

Multiple Intelligences: The areas of intelligence possessed by all people in varying degrees, not limited to traditional verbal and mathematical capability. The seven core intelligences include those two as well as musical, bodily-kinesthetic, spatial, interpersonal (social), and intrapersonal (self-knowledge). Howard Gardner, who defined the concept of multiple intelligences, urges educators to recognize that stimulation of one intelligence may increase others, as well (e.g., music to help teach math or language). Aspects of multiple intelligence theory important for choosing a school have been incorporated into the *Confident Choice Tools*.

Must Have: A Must Have need is a child or family characteristic that parents decide is both very important (to the child or family) and essential for their child's school to address.

Nice to Have: A Nice to Have need is a child or family characteristic that parents would prefer for a school to address. Nice to Have needs may be less important than ones that families "Must Have" addressed at school, or these needs may be more easily met outside of school than Must Haves.

Ownership and Control: Ownership and control determine who funds and makes decisions about the operations of a school, including mission, curriculum, teaching method, discipline and other matters. Who owns and controls a school defines the school type: public district, charter, private, religious, home, etc.

Parent Community: The relationships of parents to each other and the school and the feelings of belonging created. Feelings of belonging are influenced by individual parents' fit with other parents in a school, including where parents live, pre-existing friendships, values, social behavior and manners, and diversity of parent social groups, economic status, race and ethnicity. An element of Fit Factor #3, Social Issues, for families.

Parent Involvement: The level and type of involvement in a school by parents. Level of involvement is influenced by the types of roles available to parents in the school, the school's expectation for parent involvement, and the number of parents who actually are involved. Roles typically include decision-making boards, helping with daily school life and fundraising. An element of Fit Factor #3, Social Issues, for families.

Parochial School: A school operated by a religious group. Typically, a parochial school would include religious instruction and possibly worship as part of the school day.

Phonics: A reading instruction method in which children are taught not just letter sounds, but the sounds of common letter combinations which, all together, form words.

Physical: Having to do with the body. Displaying bodily strength, agility, speed, balance and/or flexibility; or creating ideas and solving problems using whole body. *See also* Hands-On. *See also* Learning Styles: Kinesthetic.

Physical Health Challenges: *See* Challenges

Picky Parent: A parent who makes well-informed, thoughtful choices about important matters for his or her child.

Practical Matters: Matters of logistics (scheduling, transportation, and the like) and money, rather than matters of education content or values. This is one of the four Fit Factors for matching your child and family to a school.

Principal: The primary leader of a school's instruction and operations, responsible for ensuring school quality and adherence to the school's mission. This is the instructional leader, responsible for managing teachers and other staff to ensure high quality and mission-fitting curriculum and teaching methods. This person may have ultimate responsibility for additional operations, including parent and community relations, fundraising, finance, facilities and grounds, admissions/registration and other areas. May also be called the school Director, Head of School, or other similar titles.

Private School: A school owned, operated and funded by a group other than a government. Typically, private schools are funded through tuition and fees paid by parents and through fundraising. Private schools may be independent or parochial (religious).

PTAs and PTOs: "Parent Teacher Associations" and "Parent Teacher Organizations." These are groups of parents within individual schools organized to help parents stay informed and contribute time and money to the school.

Public District School: A school owned, operated and funded by a school district. Typically, these schools are funded through a combination of local, state and federal money collected through various taxes (e.g., income tax, property tax). Public schools most often are operated by local governments, but must abide by state and federal regulations, as well.

Quality Factors: *See* Great School Quality Factors

Religious School: *See* Parochial School

Safe and Orderly Environment: A school environment in which students are kept safe from harm by other people, facilities and equipment. Also one in which students know how they are expected to behave in and out of the classroom, and they behave as expected because consequences are clear and consistent. One of the seven Great School Quality Factors.

Schedule: The school schedule includes the daily start, finish and class schedule; the yearly beginning and end dates for the school; and the periodic holiday and vacation days during the school year.

School Achievement: The overall average level of attainment by a whole school on a defined measure, regardless of progress made within a given year. Measures might include percent of children who test at grade level or average test scores. A school can have high achievement without helping students learn (e.g., if school has many academically gifted

students). A school can have low achievement despite making large progress (if student achievement started low).

School Advisory Committees or Boards: Typically, an advisory group – made up of parents, staff and community members – that advises the principal on school leadership matters. In district schools, this group’s role is often limited to advice and fundraising assistance. In charter and private schools, this group may play a larger role in establishing major school policies, choosing principals, fundraising and other critical functions.

School Culture: The values, policies, organizational structures, and practices of the school community that determine how the school spends time and money, how people at the school treat each other, and which values – such as honesty, kindness, individual achievement, respect for different ideas, and teamwork – are reinforced and which are not.

School Design: A cohesive plan for a school’s overall mission, curriculum and teaching method. Some school designs also include particular types of school management, teacher training, facilities, discipline and other elements of a school. Not all schools follow a pre-existing design. Not all schools have a cohesive design at all.

School Fit: *See Fit*

School Improvement Plan: A written plan for improving a school. Such a plan usually follows a grading or assessment of a school’s strengths and weaknesses (from test scores, parent and staff surveys and the like). A good school improvement plan includes specific goals, action steps to help reach each goal, a list of people and money needed to reach the goals, and a time target for reaching each goal.

School Progress: How much a school improves on any defined measure of success. Example measures include percent of children at grade level, parent satisfaction scores, and average student progress made by individual children in the school. School progress on one measure, such as number of students at grade level, does not always indicate success on other measures, such as growth/learning by students above grade level. For example, a school with many academically gifted students may have a very high percentage of children at grade level without students making a full year’s worth of individual student progress. Likewise, individual students in a school may make great learning progress while the school makes little progress in number of students at grade level if many are low achieving at the start. *See also* Student Progress.

School Quality: The level of excellence in helping students learn in core academic subjects, consistently demonstrated across an entire school. The highest quality schools are ones in which students of all abilities and types learn more than similar students in other schools. Research has consistently shown that schools meeting this definition of school quality exhibit the seven Great School Quality Factors used in this book far more often than schools producing lesser academic results with their students. Quality, along with school fit, is one of the two major considerations for choosing the right school for a child.

School Type: School type, in this book, refers to who owns and controls a school. This is not related to course content, teaching method, or quality. School types included in this book (some of which overlap): district public schools, public magnet schools, public charter schools, private independent schools, private parochial (religious) schools, and home schools.

Secondary Schools: Schools that serve children in grades 6 through 12 (some may begin in 5th or 7th grade). These include middle school (or “junior high,” “intermediate school”) and high school (or “upper school”).

Selective School: A school that actively chooses children based on criteria other than lottery results or pre-determined zoning assignments. Criteria may include individual child and family characteristics, such as test scores, demonstrated capabilities, and values/interests, as well as overall goals for the school’s population (e.g., mix of ages, gender, race, income).

Self-Understanding: A child’s demonstrated ability to understand his or her own strengths, weaknesses and interests and to use that understanding to make decisions.

Seven Great School Quality Factors: *See* Great School Quality Factors

Social Issues: Issues affecting your child’s and family’s feelings of belonging and connect-edness to other people in a school. This is one of the four Fit Factors for matching your child and family to a school. *See also* Social Skills.

Social Skills: Understanding and interacting well with many kinds of people. Also includes social leadership of groups, including organizing and leading others.

Special Needs: In education lingo, students with “special needs” are those with extraordinary challenges in one or more areas, including traditional academic pursuits, physical abilities, emotional skills, or life skills.

Special Program: A self-contained school program for a limited number of students housed within a larger school. Typically, the curriculum and/or teaching method differs from the larger school in which the program is housed. May focus on students with particular needs differing from most other students (e.g., extremely gifted, disabled) or on a specialized course of study (e.g., foreign language immersion). Level of interaction with other students in school varies.

Standards: *See* Grade Level Standards

Structure: The level of pre-defined activity in a school. Includes pre-defined learning goals, curriculum and teaching methods required of teachers as well as pre-defined activities required of students. In a very structured school, teachers within each grade use the same learning goals, topics and materials for teaching students. In addition, teachers direct and lead students through most learning activities. A structured curriculum helps ensure that all students are exposed repeatedly to the step-by-step facts and skill practice needed

to build basic knowledge, but may prevent more motivated and capable students from excelling in some areas and less capable students from getting the extra help they need. A less structured school allows more differences across classrooms, more differences in individual student instruction, and more student participation and choice in learning activities. Less structure allows highly-skilled and well-supported teachers to tailor teaching and learning to the needs of each student, but may allow less motivated students to fall behind their learning potential. A school may be structured in one way, such as pre-defined grade level standards, but less so in others, such as allowing students to choose from among self-directed learning activities.

Student Achievement: Achievement is the level of skill or knowledge attained. A school that focuses on pre-set achievement goals, usually called “grade level,” will work to ensure that all students achieve specified goals by year end. Better schools set higher student achievement goals for individual students when they are ready to learn beyond grade level.

Student Community: The relationships of students to each other and the feelings of belonging those relationships create. Feelings of belonging are influenced by individual students’ fit with other students in a school, including where students live, pre-existing friendships, values, social behavior and manners, and diversity of student social groups, economic status, race and ethnicity.

Student Discovery: A teaching method in which teachers allow students to choose activities for themselves, and teachers provide materials that allow students to discover new knowledge and skills for themselves. Contrast with Teacher-directed teaching method.

Student Progress: How much individual students learn in a school year, as demonstrated in end-of year assessments. Often called “growth” scores and often calculated numerically. This is distinct from School Progress, which is how much a school improves on any one of several measures, including percent of students at grade level, parent satisfaction scores, and average student progress. A school that focuses on student progress will ensure that all students, including those already ahead of grade level, increase their skills and knowledge as much as possible during the school year.

Tactile Learner: *See* Learning Styles

Target Schools: A Picky Parent term for the short list of schools available to your child (up to five) with the best chance of providing great quality and fit for your child and family. Once you’ve pared your list down to a manageable number, these are the schools that you will investigate in detail.

Teacher Quality: The level of excellence demonstrated in helping students learn. This includes combined mastery of the academic subject matter and an ability to influence a variety of students with different interests, capabilities, and other characteristics to learn.

Teacher-directed: A teaching method in which teachers directly transmit knowledge to students and guide student activities in detail. Contrast with Student Discovery teaching method.

Teaching Method: The process a teacher uses to help students learn at school. Method may be teacher-directed, focused on student discovery of knowledge for themselves, or a combination. Teaching method may include classroom behavior management, which may be controlling/strict, developmentally oriented, or a combination.

Tuition: The money that parents pay for the core elements of a child's education at a private school. Tuition often does not cover the entire cost of a private education. Schools make up the shortfall with fees charged to parents for non-core elements of education (sports, lockers, field trips, etc.) and fundraising.

Uniformity: A school is uniform when the students or parents are the same in certain respects. A school may be uniform in students' academic capabilities (e.g., schools for gifted or special needs children); race; religion; gender of students; values and ethics of students and parents; family income and wealth; student and family residence (e.g. neighborhood schools); or special interests of students (e.g., performing arts schools). Different students and families may value different aspects of uniformity.

Values: Values are core beliefs about what things are more important and less important in life. Values may be expressed through thoughts, words and actions and help determine how people spend time, money and other resources. Values help define and distinguish individuals, families, and schools.

Visual Learner: *See* Learning Styles

What Your Child Learns: One of the four Fit Factors. "What Your Child Learns" includes features of a child or family that influence what subjects and level of difficulty should be taught to a child.

Whole Child: A view of children's development and education that focuses not just on academic or cognitive learning, but on other aspects of a child's growth, too. Includes at least social, emotional and physical learning, as well as cognitive. May be divided into more detailed categories and may include spiritual development.

Whole Language: A reading instruction method in which children are exposed to reading materials so that they become familiar with common words, phrases and contexts of stories and are able to build off of those to read on their own.

Resources for Parents

This appendix contains a list of organizations, websites, books and other resources that can help you find out more about specific topics covered in this book. Web links change over time, and there are many more great books and sites that we could not include here. Visit *PickyParent.com* for more resources and up-to-date links.

The list is organized by major topic:

Discover Your Child's Needs

1. *Information about Diagnostic Testing*
2. *General Resources on Child & Schooling Challenges*
3. *Gifted Children*
4. *Other Capabilities / Multiple Intelligences*
5. *Learning Styles*
6. *Learning Disabilities and Disorders*
7. *Other Disabilities*

Get the Scoop on Schools

1. *Basic Information about Local Schools*
2. *Information on Your School's Standards*

Make the Most of Your Child's Schooling

1. *Building a Solid Foundation in Reading*
2. *Helping Your Child With Homework*
3. *Finding a Tutor for Your Child*
4. *Talking with Your Child's Teacher*

Learn More about School Types and Designs

1. *Financial Aid for Private Schools*
2. *Homeschooling*
3. *Charter Schools*
4. *School Designs*

When You Need to Know More...

How to Research Any Education Topic

Discover Your Child's Needs

1. Information about Diagnostic Testing

- *Special Educator's Complete Guide to 109 Diagnostic Tests* by Roger Peirangelo and George Giuliani. (The Center for Applied Research in Education, 1998).
- National Association of Child Psychologists
<http://www.nasponline.org/index2.html>

2. General Resources on Child & Schooling Challenges

(see also the more specific topics following Gifted Students section)

- *Finding Help When Your Child is Struggling in School* by Lawrence J. Greene. (Golden Books, 1998).
- *501 Ways to Boost Your Child's Success in School* by Robert D. Ramsey. (Contemporary Books, 2000).
- *The Fussy Baby Book: Parenting Your High-Need Child from Birth to Age Five* by William Sears and Martha Sears. (Little Brown & Company, 1996).
- *The Difficult Child* by Stanley Turecki and Leslie Tonner. (Bantam, 2000).
- *Raising Your Spirited Child: A Guide for Parents Whose Child Is More Intense, Sensitive, Perceptive, Persistent, Energetic* by Mary Sheedy Kurcinka. (Perennial, 1998).
- *Real Boys: Rescuing Our Sons from the Myths of Boyhood* by William Pollack. (Random House, 1998).
- *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls* by Mary Pipher. (Putnam, 1994).

3. Gifted Children

- Hoagie's Gifted Education Page collect numerous gifted resources in one place.
<http://www.hoagiesgifted.org>
- The Association for the Gifted was organized to help professionals and parents support gifted children.
<http://www.cectag.org>
- Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) has information on a wide variety of topics related to gifted education.
<http://ericec.org/gifted/gt-menu.html>
- The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) is an organization of parents, educators, and other professionals interested in gifted issues.
<http://www.nagc.org>
- Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG) provides information on identification and effective ways to live and work with the gifted.
<http://www.SENGifted.org>

- The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented provides links to gifted associations in each state.
<http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/stategt.html>
- *Guiding the Gifted Child: A Practical Resource for Parents and Teachers* by James T. Webb, Elizabeth A. Meckstrom, and Stephanie S. Tolan. (Great Potential Press, 1999).
- *Teaching Gifted Kids in the Regular Classroom: Strategies and Techniques Every Teacher Can Use to Meet the Academic Needs of the Gifted and Talented* by Susan Winebrenner. (Free Spirit Publishing, 1992).
- *Helping Gifted Children Soar: A Practical Guide for Parents and Teachers* by Carol Ann Strip with Gretchen Hirsch. (Great Potential Press, 2000).
- *Gifted Children: Myths and Realities* by Ellen Winner. (BasicBooks, 1996).

4. Other Capabilities / Multiple Intelligences

- The Family Education Network website includes checklists to determine your child's natural capabilities.
<http://familyeducation.com/topic/front/0,1156,21-12410,00.html>
- *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* by Howard Gardner. (Basic Books, 10th Anniversary Edition, 1993).
- *Intelligence Reframed* by Howard Gardner. (Basic Books, 1999).
- *Gifted Children: Myths and Realities* by Ellen Winner. (BasicBooks, 1996).

5. Learning Styles

- Site with general information about learning styles and multiple intelligences.
http://www.ldpride.net/learning_style_work.html
- *So Each May Learn: Integrating Learning Styles and Multiple Intelligences* by Harvey Silver, Richard Strong and Matthew Perini. (Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development, 2000).
- *Learning Styles: Putting Research and Common Sense into Practice* by Anne Lewis and Elizabeth Steinberger. (American Association of School Administrators, 1991).
- *Discover Your Child's Learning Style* by Mariaemma Willis and Victoria Hodson. (Prima Publishing, 1999).
- *Marching to Different Drummers*, 2nd Edition by Pat Burke Guild and Stephen Garger. (Association for Supervision and Curriculum, 1998).

6. Learning Disabilities ("LD") and Disorders

- LD Online is a website designed for parents and teachers offering a range of information about LD, including links to national and state level resources.
<http://www.ldonline.org>

- National Center for Learning Disabilities has links to research articles, tips for living with LD for parents and students, as well as information about legislation that affects LD students:
<http://www.ncld.org/LDInfoZone/index.cfm>
- Schwab Learning is a parent's guide for helping children with LD:
<http://www.schwablearning.org/index.asp>
- *When Your Child Has LD: A Survival Guide for Parents* by Gary Fisher, Rhoda Cummings and Pamela Espeland. (Free Spirit Publishing, 1995).
- *Teaching Kids with Learning Difficulties in the Regular Classroom: Strategies and Techniques Every Teacher Can Use to Challenge and Motivate Struggling Students* by Susan Winebrenner and Pamela Espeland. (Free Spirit Publishing, 1996).
- All Kinds of Minds is a non-profit institute that helps families, educators, and clinicians understand why children are struggling in school and provides practical strategies to help them become more successful learners.
<http://www.allkindsofminds.org>

7. Other Disabilities

- National Information Clearinghouse for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY)
<http://www.nichcy.org>
- The Beach Center on Disability has many resources for families of children with disabilities.
<http://www.beachcenter.org/>
- Disability Resources provides links to many resources on the web, including national and international sites, documents, databases, and other informational materials.
<http://www.disabilityresources.org>
- ERIC has information on a wide variety of education topics related to children with disabilities.
<http://ericec.org/osep-sp.html>

Get the Scoop on Schools

1. Basic Information about Local Schools

- GreatSchools.net is a nonprofit organization that provides information about public, private and charter schools in all 50 states and detailed school profiles for California, Arizona, Texas, Florida and Washington.
<http://www.greatschools.net>
- The School Information Partnership provides public school and district performance information.
<http://www.schoolresults.org>

- Achieve.org links to each state's department of education.
<http://www.achieve.org/achieve.nsf/StateResources?openform>
- National Center for Education Statistics has a site providing access to basic public school and district information.
<http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/search.asp>
- National Center for Education Statistics has another site including both public and private school information.
<http://nces.ed.gov/globallocator/>

2. Information on Your School's Standards

- Achieve.org links to each state's standards for its public schools.
<http://www.achieve.org/achieve.nsf/StateResources?openform>
- No Child Left Behind website developed by the U.S. Department of Education. There is a section specifically for parents.
<http://www.nclb.gov>
- The American Federation of Teachers has written a report, *Making Standards Matter*, that evaluates state standards and details how each state measures up against its criteria for high-quality.
<http://www.aft.org/edissues/standards99/toc.htm>
- The Fordham Foundation has been evaluating state standards for many years. The 2000 review is available at:
<http://www.edexcellence.net/library/soss2000/2000soss.html>
- Education Week has an annual report evaluating state's efforts to improve K-12 education by setting rigorous academic standards. The 2003 report is available online (free registration required).
<http://www.edweek.org/sreports/qc03>

Make the Most of Your Child's Schooling

1. Building a Solid Foundation in Reading

- The National Reading Panel Report was commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education.
<http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org>
- Reading First is a U.S. Department of Education initiative to foster strong reading skills in all students.
<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/readingfirst>
- The International Reading Association has several online resources offering tips for parents who want to encourage reading. Also available in Spanish.
<http://www.reading.org/publications/brochures/brochures.html>

2. *Helping Your Child with Homework*

- National PTA
<http://www.pta.org>
- National Parent Information Network site is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education.
<http://www.npin.org>
- The Family Education Network website, a commercial site, has information for parents about homework help, general parenting issues, and learning resources.
<http://www.familyeducation.com/home>
- *Math Coach: A Parent's Guide to Helping Children Succeed in Math* by Wayne A. Wickelgren and Ingrid Wickelgren. (Berkley Books, 2001).

3. *Finding a Tutor for Your Child*

- Parents interested in getting supplementary services for their child such as tutoring and after school care can get information on state-approved providers by going to this U.S. Department of Education website:
<http://www.nclb.gov/parents/supplementalservices/index.html>

4. *Talking with Your Child's Teacher*

- National PTA resources:
http://www.pta.org/parentinvolvement/bts/a12_ptconferences.asp and
http://www.pta.org/parentinvolvement/helpchild/oc_parentteacher.asp
- The National Parent Information Network has several articles about how to work effectively with your child's teacher.
<http://www.npin.org>
- The National Education Association offers information about how to have a successful parent teacher conference.
<http://www.nea.org/parents/ptconf.html>

Learn More About School Types and Designs

1. *Financial Aid for Private Schools*

- The National Association of Independent Schools website has helpful information about financing a private school education.
<http://www.nais.org/financialaid/parents>
- This commercial website offers information and links to lending companies that specialize in private school loans.
<http://www.finaid.org/otheraid/privateschool.phtml>
- In some cities, organizations make scholarships available for private school attendance, usually targeting lower-income families.
<http://www.childrenfirstamerica.org>

2. Homeschooling

- American Homeschooling Association.
<http://americanhomeschoolassociation.org>
- National Home Education Network. <http://www.nhen.org>
- Ann Zeise's A to Z Home's Cool Homeschooling website.
<http://www.gomilpitas.com/homeschooling>

3. Charter Schools

- The U.S. Department of Education's charter school page.
<http://www.uscharterschools.org>
- Center for Education Reform
<http://www.edreform.com>

4. School Designs

- The Northwest Regional Education Lab (NWREL) has an online catalog of school reform models.
<http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/catalog/index.shtml>
- Parents' Guide to Alternatives in Education by Ronald Koetzsch. (Shambhala, 1997).

When You Need to Know More... How to Research Any Education Topic

- What Works Clearinghouse on Education Research is a resource currently being developed by the U.S. Department of Education to synthesize the latest research on a variety of important education topics.
<http://www.w-w-c.org>
- National Parent Information Network site is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. It offers research-based information about a wide range of education topics.
<http://www.npin.org>
- ERIC is a national information system funded by the U.S. Department of Education to provide access to education literature and research. ERIC Digests are short, research-based papers that outline the existing research on a given topic.
<http://www.eric.ed.gov>
- The Regional Educational Laboratories are educational research and development organizations supported by contracts with the U.S. Department of Education. These regional offices act as resources for schools and districts in their regions and are a source of current research on various topics.
<http://www.nwrel.org/national>
- National PTA
<http://www.pta.org>

Sources

We studied reams of research in assembling this book. In this summary, we highlight the major sources of information we used by chapter.

Chapter One

We drew our information about the number of children attending schools other than their assigned public schools from a survey conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics, *The Condition of Education: 2000*. The statistic about how many families say that schools influenced their decisions about where to live is from Jeffrey Henig's 1999 article, "School Choice Outcomes" in *School Choice and Social Controversy: Politics, Policy, and Law*, edited by Stephen Sugarman and Frank Kemerer. The information about how many states allow some choice across or within school districts is from a 2003 state-by-state profile on the Heritage Foundation website, "Snapshots of Choice in the States." Data on the growth of magnet schools are from Rolf Blank, Roger Levine and Lauri Steel's 1996 article "After 15 Years, Magnet Schools in Urban Education" in *Who Chooses? Who Loses?* edited by Richard Elmore and Bruce Fuller. The 2003 statistics about how many charter schools there are in the United States is from The Center for Education Reform website at <http://edreform.com>. Information about the number of home schooled children comes from a report by the National Center for Education Statistics, *Home Schooling in the United States: 1999*.

In the box entitled, "Get Smart About School Types," we refer to the research literature on the comparative advantage of attending different types of schools (e.g. public vs. private). This research has returned a hodge-podge of mixed results, with no clear advantage emerging for one type of school over another once parental education and income levels are factored out. From the hodge-podge of results, studies showing benefits of attending private schools show the strongest benefit for African-American students. See the 2001 RAND study *Rhetoric Versus Reality*, by Brian P. Gill and others, for an overview of this research.

There is considerable research that parents who actively choose their children's schools are more satisfied overall with their schools' performance and that they are more involved in

various aspects of the school than parents of children in assigned schools. For more information on this subject, see the survey data reported in the *Condition of Education 2000*, published by the U.S. Department of Education, and the RAND *Rhetoric Versus Reality* study. The research on how well active choosers perform is more mixed. Choosers do seem to perform better, but it is often difficult to tell whether these outcomes result from choosing or from the fact that choosers tend to come from more education-oriented and motivated families. Again, the RAND *Rhetoric Versus Reality* study provides a recent, balanced treatment of this question.

The finding that I.Q. can increase dramatically during childhood comes from James Webb, Elizabeth Meckstroth, and Stephanie Tolan's 1994 book *Guiding the Gifted Child: A Practical Source for Parents and Teachers*. There are many examples of Great Schools that dramatically increase students' performance. For one compilation, see The Education Trust's *Dispelling the Myth*, available at <http://www.edtrust.org>.

Our discussion of school quality rests on decades of research examining effective schools to determine the characteristics they have in common. On the Web, The Association for Effective Schools, Inc at <http://www.mes.org/> is one source for more information about this research, and we drew heavily on the information there to craft how we explained school quality. If you would like to read some of the more recent studies, see M.C. Wang and colleagues' 1993 article "Toward a Knowledge Base for School Learning" in the *Review of Educational Research*; and Charles Teddlie and Samuel Stringfield's 1993 book *Schools Make a Difference: Lessons Learned From a 10-Year Study of School Effects*. These resources contain references to the many other studies that explore this topic.

Chapter Two

In Chapter Two, we refer to various theories regarding how children differ from one another in their capabilities, interests, intelligence, development, and learning styles. For Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, see his 1983 book *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* and his more recent work *Intelligence Reframed* (1999). Mel Levine's work is featured in his 2002 book *A Mind at a Time* and the *All Kinds of Minds* website at <http://www.allkindsofminds.org/>. Authors who focus on "whole child" thinking when it comes to children's development include Joanne Hendrick in the 2000 book *The Whole Child: Developmental Education for the Early Years*. More a reference for educators than parents, this textbook provides an overview of the "whole child" concept. The "high-need child" is described by William Sears and Martha Sears in *The Fussy Baby Book: Parenting Your High-Need Child From Birth to Age Five* (1996). The "difficult child" is the subject of Stanley Turecki and Leslie Tonner's *The Difficult Child* (2000). The concept of a "spirited child" derives from Mary Sheedy Kurcinka's *Raising Your Spirited Child: A Guide for Parents Whose Child Is More Intense, Sensitive, Perceptive, Persistent, Energetic* (1998).

Chapter Three

In Chapter 3, we explore the concept of determining your child's Basic Learning Capability. See Webb, Meckstroth, and Tolan's *Guiding the Gifted Child*, first cited in Chapter One. This work is also the source of the finding that children's I.Q. can increase with proper stimulation and challenge. On gifted education, we also drew on Ellen Winner's 1996 book *Gifted Children: Myths and Realities*.

The Viewpoint box on Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences draws on his 1983 book *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* and his more recent book *Intelligence Reframed* (1999).

Chapter Four

There are several books and articles that explore learning style theory, including Harvey Silver, Richard Strong and Matthew Perini's 2000 book *So Each May Learn: Integrating Learning Styles and Multiple Intelligences*; Anne Lewis and Elizabeth Steinberger's 1991 book *Learning Styles: Putting Research and Common Sense into Practice*; Mariaemma Willis and Victoria Hodson's 1999 book *Discover Your Child's Learning Style* and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development's 1998 volume *Marching to Different Drummers*, 2nd Edition.

There is considerable academic debate regarding whether modifying instruction to match an individual's learning style enhances student achievement, particularly for low achieving students. For a discussion of how learning style matching improves student achievement, see Rita Dunn and Shirley Griggs' book, *Learning Styles: Quiet Revolution in American Secondary Schools* (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1988). For a thorough and critical discussion of the research surrounding learning styles, see Lynn Curry's article "Critique of the Research on Learning Styles" (Oct. 1990, *Educational Leadership*).

Our discussion of motivation was informed by the work of psychologist David McClelland. See Lyle M. Spencer, Jr. and Singe M. Spencer's 1993 book *Competence at Work: Models for Superior Performance*.

The controversy, both legal and academic, surrounding inclusion, the practice of placing students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment, is well documented in numerous publications. One good resource is the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services within the U.S. Department of Education: <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/>.

The Viewpoint box on Mel Levine draws on his books *All Kinds of Minds* (1992) and *A Mind at a Time* (2002).

Chapter Seven

In this chapter, we refer to the research supporting exposure to a foreign language. In addition to the direct benefits of speaking another language, language study seems to have a positive effect on children's ability to understand and use their native languages as well. See the Center for Applied Linguistics' website for links to such research (<http://www.cal.org>). Similarly, there seem to be additional benefits to learning music. One example of a study connecting musical exposure with mathematical performance is Amy Graziano, Matthew Peterson and Gordon Shaw's 1999 article in the journal *Neurological Research*.

Chapter Nine

In Chapter Nine, we discuss the large body of research surrounding parent involvement in school and at home. For a summary of this research, see Amy Baker and Laura Soden's 1998 review, "The Challenges of Parent Involvement Research," available online at http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed419030.html.

We also refer to the literature on how peers influence academic achievement. For more information, see Roslyn Mickelson's 2001 article, "Subverting Swann: First and Second-Generation Segregation in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools," in the *American Educational Research Journal*; Michal Kurlaender and John Yun's 2000 article "Is Diversity a Compelling Educational Interest? Evidence from Metropolitan Louisville," a report issued by the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University; Caroline Hoxby's 2000 paper, "Peer Effects in the Classroom: Learning from Gender and Race Variation," available from the National Bureau of Economic Research at <http://papers.nber.org/papers/w7867>; and Eric Hanushek, John Kain, Jacob Markman, and Steven Rivkin's 2001 paper, "Does the Ability of Peers Affect Student Achievement?" available at <http://www.utdallas.edu/research/greenctr/Papers/pdfpapers/paper24.pdf>.

See the section above on Chapter One for information about research on the performance of different school "types" (e.g. public and private.) For information about the research related to a wide range of school "designs" see the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's *Catalog of School Reform Models* at <http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/catalog/>.

Finally, we cite research showing that how much a school spends has little correlation with its quality. Academic debate rages over this topic, on display in such collections as *Developments in School Finance, 1997- Does Money Matter?* (available from the National Center for Educational Statistics, <http://nces.ed.gov>) and *Does Money Matter? The Effect of School Resources on Student Achievement and Adult Success* (1996). Few scholars, however, argue that one should judge a school's quality by how much it costs or spends. *How it spends the money is also critical*, and this, as we have noted, continues to pose a challenge for many wealthy schools.

Chapter Ten

This chapter mentions research showing that schools are more effective when they “differentiate,” or tailor instruction to meet the needs of individual students. For a review of this extensive literature and its nuances, see Tom Loveless’s 1998 report, “The Tracking and Ability Grouping Debate,” available from the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation at <http://www.edexcellence.net/>. Findings in this area have heavily influenced the recommendations for instructional practice outlined by such organizations as the National Research Council (<http://books.nap.edu/html/nses/>) and the National Reading Panel (<http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org/>). The benefits of differentiation have been shown especially high for gifted students. See the website of the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented (<http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/nrcgt.html>) for a number of research articles exploring this topic.

In this chapter, we again cite research about the lack of connection between how much a school costs or spends and how well it performs. See the discussion under Chapter Nine, above.

Chapter Eleven

The effective schools research that is the basis for the seven Great School Quality Factors is referenced in the section above on Chapter One. The research on differentiating instruction to meet varied students’ needs is cited in the section on Chapter Ten. The research on approaches to teaching reading is discussed under Chapter Twelve, below.

Research on class size is filled with claims and counterclaims. There is certainly no consensus that smaller classes are necessarily better, and little evidence that small reductions (e.g., from 35 to 30) make any difference. Some of the best studies, in which students were randomly assigned to *very* small classes, have shown positive effects. One often cited example is Tennessee’s STAR program, which compared K-3 students in classes of 22-26 with those in classes of 13-17 and found lasting benefits for students in the smaller classes. See Frederick Mosteller’s 1995 summary, “The Tennessee Study of Class Size in the Early School Grades” in the journal *The Future of Children*.

Studies on the value of smaller *schools* are summarized in Mary Ann Raywid’s 1999 review “Current Literature on Small Schools,” available at: http://www.ericfacility.net/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed425049.html.

For a concise summary of the research on what characteristics of teachers influence students’ success, see Dan Goldhaber’s Spring 2002 article “The Mystery of Good Teaching” in the journal *Education Next*.

Chapter Twelve

For more information on the research supporting language immersion programs, see the website of the Center for Applied Linguistics (<http://www.cal.org>). The most conclusive evidence to date about reading instruction can be found by looking at a review conducted by the National Reading Panel. Their report is available at (<http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org/>).

Chapter Sixteen

For a summary of the research on delaying the start of kindergarten, see “When to Start Kindergarten? Suggestions for Parents from the National Association of School Psychologists,” available online at <http://www.teachersandfamilies.com/open/parent/kg1.cfm>. The National Research Council’s 1999 study *High Stakes: Testing for Tracking, Promotion, and Graduation* also discusses the research on delayed kindergarten and reviews studies on the consequences of having students repeat a grade of school.

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