



## Preschool Director Frequently Asked Questions for Admissions Season 2017-18

Responses from the Bay Area Directors of Admission (BADA)

**What are the birthday cut-off dates and student evaluation deadlines for each school?** Birthday cut-off dates and student evaluation deadlines vary from school to school. We encourage families to check directly with individual schools. Some schools have strict birthday cut-off dates while others are flexible.

**Should parents write 'first choice' letters?** Members of the Bay Area Directors of Admission continue to agree that first choice letters are not considered part of the core admission process. Please remind families that a letter of this nature, by definition, should only be sent to one school.

**Aside from the teacher evaluation forms, should parents ask friends, board members, etc. to write letters of recommendation?** As with first choice letters, letters of support are not required as a part of the core admissions process. If they are included in the file, admission directors may or may not consider these letters in their admission decision. Please do not send videos, photo books, portfolios, etc.

**If a child is currently receiving support services or has been evaluated, tested, or assessed, should the family disclose this information?** Yes. While it is not required to disclose this information, it is helpful to schools so that they may accurately determine the student's potential success and fit at their school. In addition, it establishes a partnership and opens dialogue between parents and the school.

**How many independent elementary schools should a family consider?** As a group, we do not have an actual number to offer, but suggest you encourage your parents to cast their net as wide as possible. Advise them to tour multiple schools, but only apply to those schools to which they would send their child if accepted. We suggest to parents that they also consider public, parochial and other non-independent school options.

**Student evaluation forms are typically filled out in November/December. If a child is new to the preschool or has exhibited growth or any type of change after the evaluations are submitted, is it helpful to send an updated form?** Yes. Current, relevant information about the child is welcome. Please be sure to send the updated form to all independent schools to which the child has applied. Early February would be the ideal time to send this.

**Independent schools tend to offer many admission events. Are optional events truly optional?** Yes. It is our job to offer these events so that parents can get to know each school and learn something different at each event. Families should only attend the events that speak to them and as time allows. It is advisable that families limit their children to one admission event per day if possible.

**If our families hear something "strange" about a school, what should they do?** Many online resources and anecdotal conversations contain misinformation. Sources like anonymous blogs and review sites, in particular,

tend to feed parental angst and frenzy. If parents have a question about a school, please ask them to call the school directly.

**What can we do to support our parents in February through mid-March when there is little for the parents to do from an admission process standpoint?** Please encourage your parents to take this relative quiet time to discuss at home the benefits of each school and why they may be a good fit for their child and family. It is often helpful for parents to put their thoughts down on paper so that they have a plan in-hand, once admission decisions have been received. (If we get into XYZ school then, this. If we are wait listed at XYZ school, then that.) As you know, receiving the admission decision letters can be an extremely emotional for parents. It's about their children and most have not been through this process before. We are seeing more and more families become emotional and confused which can lead to behavior that may be out of character for them. As such, remind families that their child's admission into school is not a prize to be won, but a match to be made, and that there is a "right fit" school for each and every child. **Please also urge your parents to release offers that they do not intend to accept as early in the week as possible.** Many other families will be anxiously awaiting a space off the waitlist.

**Should we encourage our families who receive a wait list/wait pool letter to show up at the schools to advocate for their child?** No. Showing up or trying to see the admission director during "decisions week" is not helpful. We have all the information we need and we ask that parents please be patient with us. We need to stay by the phone and/or on our email, in order to manage responses and determine if/when we can look to our wait pools.

**Will Admission Directors visit prospective students at preschool sites? If so, what information, if any, should be passed on to parents about these visits?** Some, but not all admission directors visit applicant children in their preschool settings as part of the admission process. These visits are usually to gain more insight about the child and his/her fit for the school's program. We advise that you explain to families in preliminary group meetings, that preschool visits by specific BADA schools may or may not occur. We understand that every preschool has its own practice around communication to families. When possible, we prefer that you do not concern families with specific dates and times that an admission director will visit.