

Choosing a School for a Child's Inner, Emotional, & Interpersonal Development

Choosing a school during your child's formative years is probably the single most important decision you can make. It will affect your child's life-long happiness and success.

Why? Because in their early years, children are developing inner skills—both emotional and interpersonal—as well as attitudes and habits that will carry them through life. As a result, it is probably a better financial investment to send them to a good private school while they are young than to wait and send them to a private college or university later.

A person's happiness and professional success are mostly determined by emotional intelligence, not academic scores. (See *Emotional Intelligence* by Daniel Goleman.) While this fact may be intuitively obvious, we still tend to judge schools by test scores, not by how much they improve children's emotional and social skills.

It is easy when looking at schools to look at test scores, technology in the classroom, facilities, playgrounds, landscaping, and lunch menus, while missing what is most important—how well the school helps your child grow as a whole person.

At the same time, it is not easy to determine how a school will help your child develop emotionally and socially. No tests exist to compare. But you can look at a school's practices to help you decide which one will do a better job.

Below is a chart outlining Living Wisdom School's emotional development and interpersonal skills training practices. Each practice really requires a conversation to truly understand and appreciate its impact on children. The chart simply provides a means to help you discuss with the LWS staff what the school does for its students.

Also a school choice checklist is provided. It suggests questions you might ask school administrators to help you evaluate schools.

Obviously, academics matter also. The academics at LWS are truly excellent. Most graduates score at or above the 90th percentile in high school admissions tests (ISEE, HSPT. LWS students are accepted at all the top private high schools in the area. It is, however, equally, if not more, important to evaluate a school on how well it will enhance your child's overall personal development.

Living Wisdom School



Inner, Emotional, & Interpersonal Development

Education For Life

With an enriched academic curriculum, Living Wisdom Schools equally prioritize your children's inner, emotional, and social development. The Education For Life system practiced at LWS has been refined and optimized through over 30 years of dedicated effort at several schools. These schools help students become inwardly happy, academically strong, and socially adept.

Living Wisdom School
456 College Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94306

Pre-K through 8th grade
Call for an appointment
and school tour at 650-462-8510

	Inner & Emotional Development				Interpersonal Skills Training				
Living Wisdom School Practice	Generate Inner Happiness & Optimism	Use Willpower to Energize Oneself	Focus on Tasks	Calm Oneself	Ability to relate & interact with different people from their perspective	Leadership & Teamwork, work & play well with others	Kindness, appreciate & help others	Public Speaking	Confidence around others
Affirmative, Inspiring Rules	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Inclusiveness Training					✓	✓	✓		✓
Conflict Resolution					✓	✓	✓		✓
Kindness Stickers							✓		
Happiness Stickers	✓	✓							
Rocks in the Basket	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		
Morning Energization Exercises		✓	✓	✓					
Snack and Lunch Recess	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Circle Time	✓			✓	✓		✓		✓
Meditation	✓	✓	✓	✓					
Deep Breathing	✓	✓	✓	✓					
Yoga		✓	✓	✓					
Uplifting Singing	✓	✓					✓		
Confidence Stances								✓	✓
Camping Trips	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Literature Studies			✓		✓				
Social Studies			✓		✓				
Quality Speeches	✓							✓	✓
In-depth vs. quantity learning			✓						
Multi-Grade Classes					✓	✓			
Teach Emotional Responsibility	✓	✓	✓	✓					
Theater Play on the Life of a Great Soul		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Loving, Energetic Teachers as Role Models	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

- ✓ Large check indicates the practice directly helps develop the corresponding inner, emotional, or interpersonal trait.
- ✓ Small check indicates the practice plays a supportive role.

SCHOOL CHOICE CHECKLIST

Here is a list of questions to ask school administrators to help you evaluate a school. Potential responses are listed from OK, Better, to Best.

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<p>1. How does the school actively develop the children’s personal, emotional, and interpersonal social skills?</p>		
<p>Happens naturally, as part of all activities</p>	<p>In-class or after-class projects/ discussion/training</p>	<p>Specific practices employed throughout each day</p>
<p>2. Are the children taught to be inclusive and demonstrate teamwork and leadership in their play with others?</p>		
<p>Told it is good to include others</p>	<p>Some structured activities that have all the children play together</p>	<p>Playtime is actively monitored; teachers intervene immediately if anyone is excluded</p>
<p>3. Are there specific methods to encourage the children to be kind & respectful of others?</p>		
<p>Only verbal encouragement or demands to “be nice”</p>	<p>External rewards and/or recognition for good deeds, fosters “kindness competition”</p>	<p>Methods to help children appreciate and enjoy being kind; intrinsic motivation fostered</p>
<p>4. Does the school actively help children resolve conflicts in real time?</p>		
<p>Children punished with time-outs only, or student-negotiated conflict resolution</p>	<p>Teachers lead conflict resolutions for physical fights only</p>	<p>Real-time teacher intervention even for unkind words</p>
<p>5. Are the school rules affirmative, inspirational, and expansive, or merely a negative list of “do-not’s”?</p>		
<p>List of “do-not’s”</p>	<p>Mixed list of negative and affirmative rules</p>	<p>Positive list of qualities to aspire to</p>
<p>6. Are the children encouraged to eat properly during school hours?</p>		
<p>Lunch time only, no snacks</p>	<p>Snack and lunch times provided</p>	<p>Students monitored to ensure they eat their snacks and lunches before play</p>

7. How do the teachers seem?

Sad, tired, frazzled

Okay

Happy, energetic, calm

8. What kinds of field trips are offered?

Extended trips help form deeper connections amongst students and with teachers.

Day trips only

Overnight trips

Several week-long trips

9. Do the children received enough physical activity during school on a daily basis?

Lunch recess only

Lunch and snack recesses

Morning exercises before classes, and lunch/snack recesses

10. Does the school utilize theater plays to help child's development?

Volunteer play only, limited number of students can participate

Every child participates, plays have entertainment themes only

Every child participates, plays have inspiring themes based on the lives of great people

11. How are songs & music used to inspire the children?

Volunteer choir sings contemporary popular songs only

Everyone sings contemporary popular songs

Everyone sings uplifting songs

12. To what extend do the children receive public speaking/performance/ presentation practice?

Children asked to speak and present in class

Volunteer play participation and class presentations

All students perform in play, give class presentations, and give yearly public speeches

13. Do the children have a morning meditation before classes start?

None, start right in on classwork

Quiet time

Morning meditation

14. Are the classes multi-grade or single grade only?

Multi-grade classes help children learn to interact naturally with people of different ages.

All single grade only

Some multi-grade

All multi-grade