

How to choose the best school

FROM time to time, I'm lucky enough to receive letters from a reader, most recently from a lovely mum from Sydney who was looking for a little more advice about school choice.

I've been having the same conversation with my daughter about a school for my granddaughter. The circle of life!

For starters, it's a great idea to pay a visit the school for yourself.

The practical things such as distance to the school, transport arrangements, cost and before and after school care are important to consider too.

Regardless of the type of school it is, the focus should be on learning.

While there is no such thing as a perfect school, I am all for doing a little re-

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search. Here are some suggestions of the questions that you could ask during a school visit:

- Rather than asking 'what will my child learn?' ask 'how will my child learn?'
- How will you get to know my child as a learner?
- How will you make learning relevant for my child?
- How will you involve my child in learning?
- What does the learning environment look like?
- How will you measure success in learning? (hopefully the answer will be something more than tests scores and NAPLAN results!)

- How will you involve me in my child's learning and in the life of the school?
- How do you use technology to enable learning?
- What will parent engagement, including communication, look like?
- What are some of the other opportunities available to my child at the school?

A deep dive into their website or their Facebook page, if they have one, is good value too. What do these sites say about the school?

It's not an easy decision, I know. At the heart of making the best choice is knowing how your child learns best, what his or her needs are and what gives them joy.

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