

How to Choose the Right School for Your Child and Navigate the Admission Process





ISAAD...

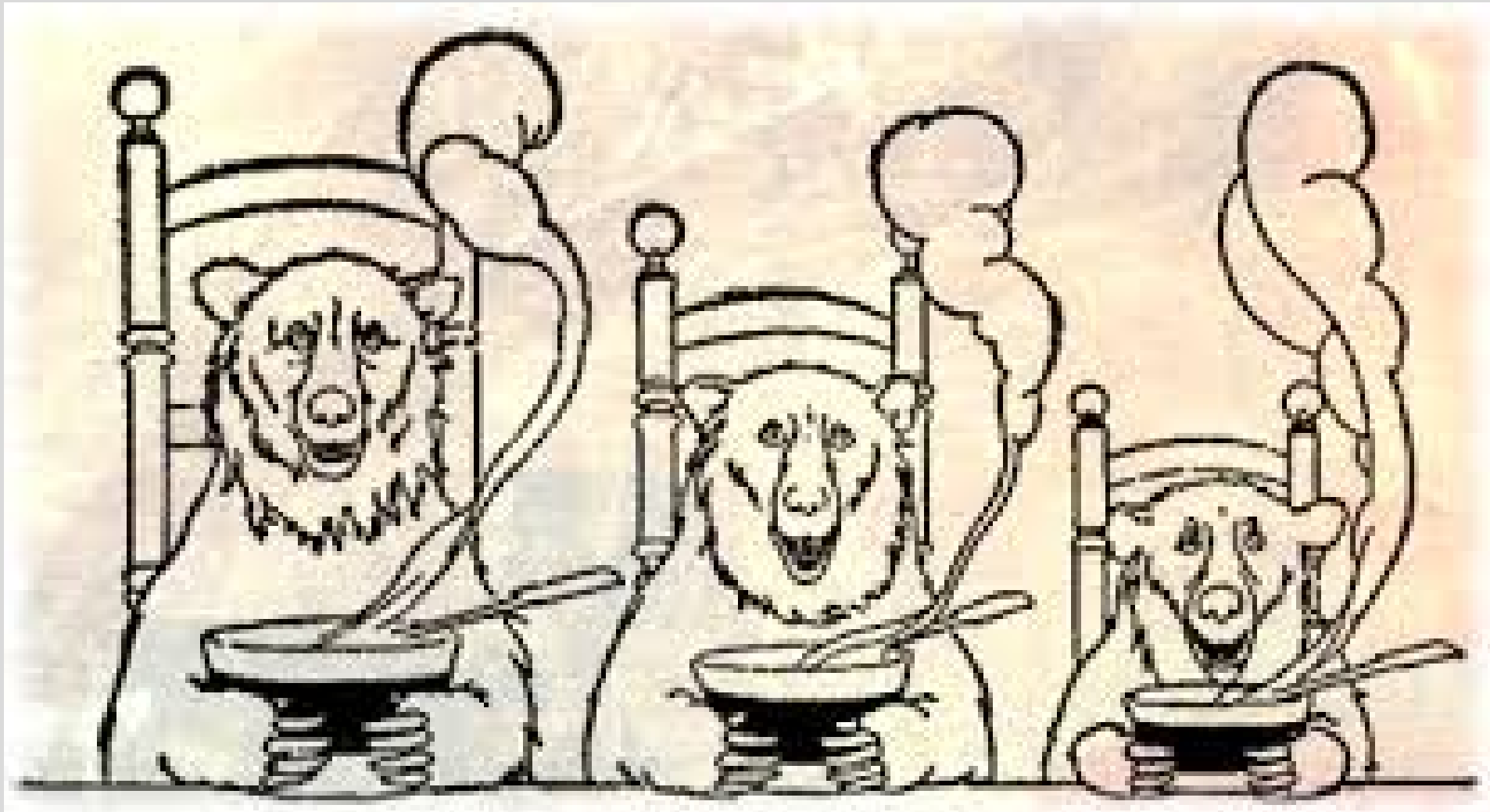




The Answer:



Define Your Ideal School...



School Type...

- Co-ed or single sex
- Public, Private, Charter, Home-School
- Uniform or free-choice
- Classical Christian, Montessori, IB, Traditional, Progressive, Learning-Different

Grade range...

- Do you want a school that focuses on your child's age range, or one that can serve your child through elementary, middle, and high school?
- There are pros and cons to all

Facilities...

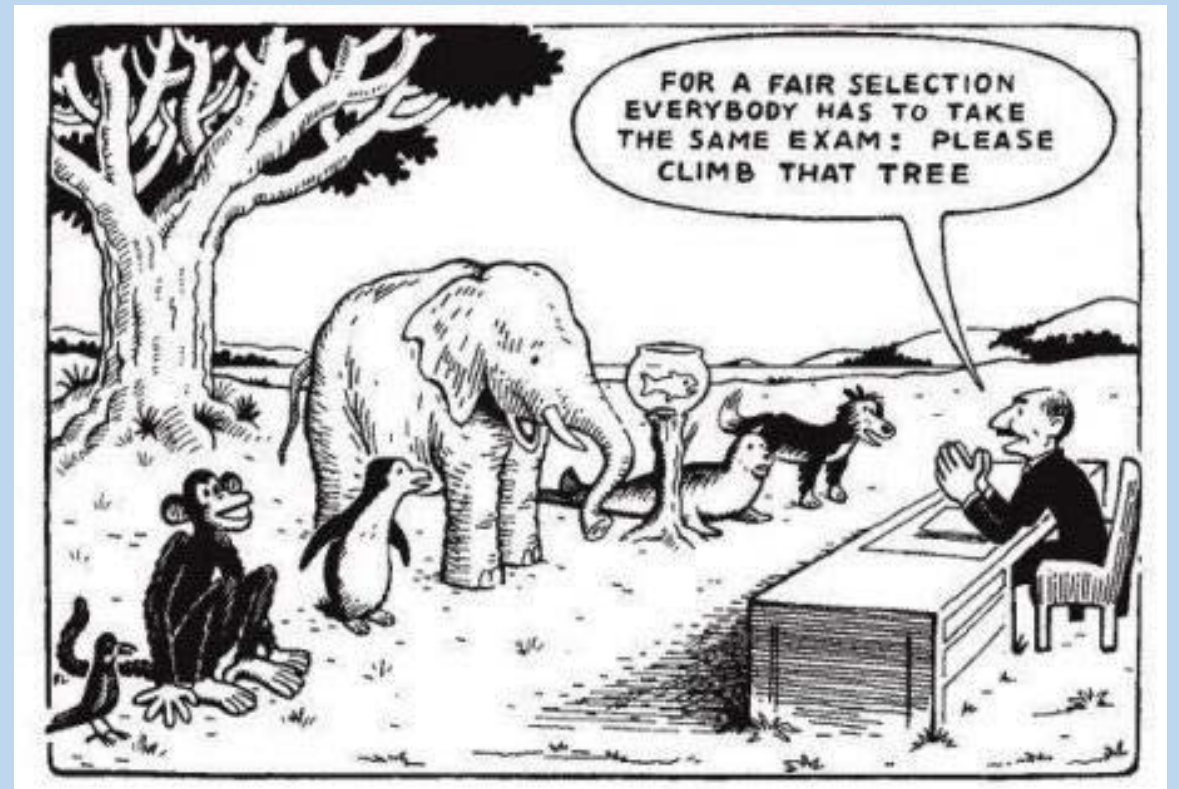
- In addition to the overall condition of the school, look at the facilities your child may use. Is the art department well-stocked? Are sports facilities well-equipped? Are computers up to date? How extensive is the library/language lab?

Student Body...

- Consider both average class size and total enrollment. A smaller population may mean fewer social opportunities, but more chances for your student to shine
- Diversity of students
- Are they happy, over worked, just right
- Where do most families come from (immediate neighborhood or all over?)

Educational Philosophy...

- Most independent schools fall along a continuum between traditional and progressive, but what does that mean?
- How are classes taught?
- How are expectations conveyed?
- How are students tested?
- Thoughts on homework, technology, honors, grades, etc...



Curriculum...

- What courses are offered? Which are required and which are elective? In what order are math, science, and humanities courses taught? Is there an interdisciplinary emphasis, so that what students study in English meshes with what they're learning in history?
- Does the curriculum fit your student's learning needs?

Location...

- Convenience matters, especially if you want your child to take part in school activities. Time the commute before and after school just to be sure.
- Is walking to/from important to you and your family

Special Programs and Extra-curriculars...

- Does the school provide programs that fit your student's needs and interests?
- Consider academic support, language programs, arts, athletics, leadership opportunities, and service programs.
- Is the school a place where your child can blossom?

Questions to ask schools when trying to determine the right fit:

- What is the school's mission or educational philosophy?
- Is the school accredited, and if so, by what accrediting agency?
- How many students does the school have? How diverse is the student body?
- What is the student-teacher ratio?
- Is the atmosphere competitive or more nurturing?
- What kinds of students do best at the school?
- What types of learning experiences are available—in class, on the playing field, in extracurricular activities, in leadership programs and community service?
- How does the school get parents involved? What do parents typically do?

Questions to ask schools when trying to determine the right fit continued...

- What is the process and timing for applying to the school?
- How much is the tuition?
- Are there other charges, such as for books, lab fees, transportation, and so on?
- What financing options or financial aid does the school offer?
- What is the financial aid application process? When are the deadlines?

Tips

- Attend a non-marketed school event if possible
- Visit with current parents
- Follow social media feeds
- Keep an open mind (perception is not always reality)
- Don't fall into the fear of test prep!!!!
- Don't tell your child one school is “perfect” or another is a “back up”
- Be honest...with yourself and the school

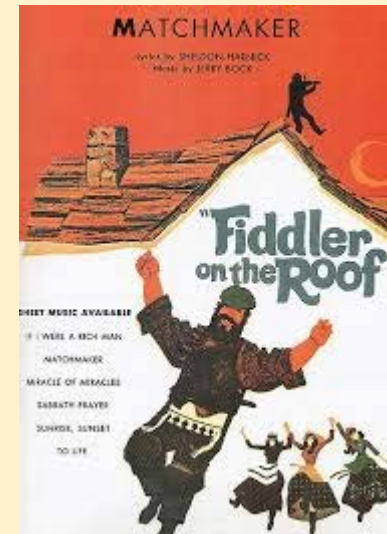


Matchmaker, matchmaker
Find me a school
One where I'll rule
And won't feel like a fool.

Matchmaker, matchmaker
Please don't be cruel
Just find me the perfect school.

My papa says I'm a great dancer.
I'm taking my first lesson this spring.
My mama says I'm curing cancer.
Though science isn't really my thing.

Matchmaker, matchmaker
I'm just like the rest
My grades aren't the best
And I really can't test.
But I know that you have a
magical touch
To find me the perfect school.



So now what?...

- Make a list of schools to explore
- Create a checklist for each school
- Check school websites and make note of all Admission/Tour opportunities, dates and deadlines
- Register and attend events
- Start applications in a timely manner and watch all deadlines

Decision Time...

- Some schools will have “rolling admission”
- Some schools will either say: Admit, Wait Pool or Not Ready
- You *can* ask for feedback on decision
- Let school(s) know your response either way

Resources/Links

- [How to raise successful kids -- without over-parenting | Julie Lythcott-Haims](#)
- [List of ISAAD Schools](#)
- [National Association of Independent Schools website](#)