

# School Time



Class size, curriculum, homework regimen, daily structure, and disciplinary actions are all factors to consider. While most public schools are in compliance with the 18 per class for grades Kindergarten through 3, private schools are at liberty to decide what's best for their students. Larger classes are not necessarily bad especially if there is an aide to help out. However, individualized attention becomes difficult in large teacher to student ratios. My son's first grade class has 35 students. Yet, his teacher (maybe just because she and her aide are so good at what they do) finds time to make each child feel special. Furthermore, she finds time to send individualized notes home on a regular basis. That is a major plus! Find out how your child's teacher will contact you if there is a problem; journal, e-mail, mail service, etc.

**W**hile many schools have already hosted open houses and Lee County School Choice Offices have begun their plight of student placement, most schools allow parent tours by appointment. This may be one of your best tools in choosing the appropriate place for your child! Yes, asking family, friends, and neighbors their opinion of local schools is great, but can often yield some negative viewpoints. Take into consideration that when eliciting advice about your child's school- no two children are the same! Visit the school yourself and observe the environment! Were the teachers and students happy or at least pleasant, were the students on task (doing their assigned work), were high expectations set by the administration? Indicators of this would be teachers enjoying what they are doing, the school is neat and orderly, and there "isn't" a sense of constant pandemonium in the office and halls. In order to make the most out of your visit, have your questions prepared and written down. Trust me you won't be the first or only parent to take notes on a tour! It will save you from having to remember everything they tell you!

Lastly, you may want to include a few questions about the forms of discipline the school uses. The old ruler and paddle have been hung as icons of the past in most schools, but lets admit there are usually a few students who could still use some firm discipline. We never want to think it would be our child causing a disruption, but if they did how would it be handled? Would I be contacted at the first sign of a problem or would a detention slip come first? If you have a spirited child, don't let these questions go unasked. Working together with teachers is the greatest guard against misbehavior!

Whatever your questions may be, don't hesitate to ask! You should feel good about where your child spends most of their day. Furthermore, your child should enjoy their education! ❖



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