

Choosing A School

Questions to help parents of children with special needs



All parents have questions about a new school. As a parent of a child with special needs, you may have some very specific concerns.

We have created some sample questions that we hope you find useful as you visit schools. Please feel free to use the questions below as a guide to help you select a school that meets the needs of your child.

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- What are your school's expectations regarding adapting and modifying curriculum to meet the needs of students?
 - What does your site do to make sure the special needs of students are part of your school community?
 - If my child is in a special day class, will there be opportunities for mainstreaming? In what classes?
 - What before and after- school programs are available for students with special needs?
 - What are the grade levels at your site?
 - What parent/support groups do you have at your site? Are special education parents represented?
 - What is your school's special focus or vision?
 - What do you consider your school's greatest success in special education?
 - Are AB 3632 (mental health) services provided on site or are students bused?
 - How many students are in your special education programs?
RSP Inclusion Special Day Classes
 - What percentage of the students receive special education services?

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- Who coordinates the mainstreaming of special day class students? Does s/he have other responsibilities as well?
- Are the special education classes in one part of the building or are they integrated throughout the physical plant?
- What challenges do you see for special education students at your school?
- How long has the present principal, resource specialist, etc (fill in your interest) been at the school?
- Is there a waiting list for the after-school daycare program?
- Are there parents who would be willing to talk about their experiences at the school?
- Can you please describe your school-wide positive behavior plan?
- If your child requires special equipment or services of low incidence disabilities, ask what experiences the staff has with that specific disability.
- Is there anything I did not ask about the special education program at your school that you feel is important?

High school/Middle school questions:

- Is the campus closed?
- What electives are available?
- Is there an after-school tutoring program?
- What kind of programs are available at the school site?
Community services, health, Beacon, substance abuse, etc.
- Does the school have a sports program?
- Is there block or traditional scheduling?

