



Preparing for Campus Interviews

The On-Campus Parent Interview

Done either at drop-off or pick up on the day of your child's student visit, the family interview is a critical piece of the admission puzzle. It is not only a prospective school's chance to get to know your family and child better, but also your opportunity to become more familiar with the school and its mission, as you near the end of the admission process.

Think of the interview as a two-way process: You should find out more about the school. You should also help the admission officers to better understand your child, particularly who he/she is outside of the classroom, as they will have lots of information about your child as a student in the application itself. What more might he/she bring to the school community? What might the prospective school not see in *just* reviewing your child's report cards and test scores? What concerns might you have about his/her transition to this school community?

This is an opportunity to honestly discuss your child's candidacy, as well as ask questions of your own. Be sure to take notes of your own. This will help you keep all the schools straight as you begin narrowing things down.

It is also a wonderfully private time to ask about financial aid. Don't be embarrassed! Everyone asks. With no other family members present, this is your time to ask all of the questions you need to about how this school can work with you to make it financially feasible for you and your child. No need to be embarrassed. It's just the two of you.

Although there are many things you could cover, you won't have time for everything. Set priorities so you can make sure you find the answers to the five to eight questions that matter most to you and your child at this point in the admission process.

The On Campus Student Visit

Why do schools require each student to visit? Schools receive many applications from numerous students who attend a variety of schools. The admission committee is looking for students who will thrive and grow, academically, athletically and socially, at their respective schools. Your child's report card, test scores and teacher recommendations are *equally* important tools for getting to know your child's strengths and areas for growth. However, the most objective way for a school to get to know a prospective student, is to have them spend time in their classrooms, interacting with teachers and students. An individual school visit gives each school a chance to get to know a student, to see how they might fit with their respective school culture, academically and socially.

What can my child expect on their school visit? Each school has its own set of requirements, but you can expect to spend either one or two days at each school. In most cases, your child will arrive at the start of school (8:00 a.m.) and be greeted by a "buddy," a classmate who will be their guide for the day. Your child will follow their buddy to all of his/her classes and activities for the day. Your child should do their best to participate in all class activities: completing worksheets, working on math problems, playing games at gym, making projects in art. The school will collect the worksheets your child completes to add to their admission file. At the end of the visit, your child will sit down for a conversation with an admission officer. These student interviews are an extended conversation about your child and a chance to get to know who they are beyond what is written on the application. You will pick up your child at 3:00 p.m., the end of the school day.

How Can I Help My Child Prepare for Their Visit? Your child will most likely feel nervous before their school visit. That is perfectly natural! Fear is OK. Being held back by fear is not. As a family, please make sure that your child gets plenty of sleep the night before their visit. Prepare a good, hearty, but not heavy and sleep-inducing breakfast to help them start their busy day. Try to resist the urge to prepare your child for any additional testing. This will only make them nervous about giving too many 'wrong answers.' Testing is just one piece of the admission puzzle. Try to avoid telling students they will be visiting 'their new school.' This can create nervousness and expectations that might lead to

disappointment. Let students enjoy the day and be themselves, without worrying about what comes next. Instead, ask them to be alert, aware and active participants in their visits. Make sure that they have thought of at least one question to ask in their admission interview, about something that is important to them. It is especially important to ask students their reactions to their visits. You might be surprised by their keen observations about their next school.