

Your Child's Schooling Options

We live in a world of countless options for childhood education. While there are many benefits to having choices when it comes to schooling, the responsibility of choosing a school may weigh heavily, leaving parents to wonder if they are doing the right thing for their children in an increasingly complex society.

As you evaluate the many schooling options available for your children, reflect on the following questions to help apply biblical wisdom to your educational choices.

QUESTION ONE: Who Has Ultimate Responsibility?

Children are wired to observe and learn about all kinds of things in life—from friends, family, church, television and so on. But what is your role? What part do you play in what they learn and how they find their place in the world? Is one form of education better than another? Is your child okay in the public school? Is a private school or home schooling better?

The answer will vary from situation to situation. The most important thing to remember is that you have ultimate responsibility for the education of your child(ren). Deuteronomy 6:6-7 tells us: “These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.”

Parents can easily become overwhelmed with the magnitude of choosing a school. Take heart in knowing that God watches over your children in the classroom. Even a sub-par school can become a fertile learning environment for your children when combined with parental involvement, partnering with teachers toward a strong education and spiritual guidance at home.

QUESTION TWO: What is Best for Each Child?

Every child is different; even children in the same family have their own unique needs. With the right guidance at home, some children thrive academically and even spiritually in public school. Other children may need the smaller classes available in private schools and some might need homeschooling.

QUESTION THREE: How Do We Keep Faith a Priority?

Everyone wants his or her child to succeed in life, but too often, parents who want to give their children an edge for the future load up their schedules with activities that squeeze out time for family and faith. The result? Exhausted, disconnected families. Avoid this modern-day trap by unapologetically and intentionally prioritizing simple activities that

deepen the roots of faith, character and relationships – even if it means saying “no” to otherwise enriching opportunities.

QUESTION FOUR: Who can give advice and guidance?

It is always wise to ask those who have chosen different schooling options (including public, charter, private and home education) for insights on the good and bad of each. Opinions on all sides can be strong. That’s okay. Just listen and learn so you can gain as much insight as possible as you prayerfully evaluate your own child’s situation.

GOING FURTHER - Resources

Recommended Books:

Some books are available for checkout at the Faith@Home Center or purchase online.

Grace Based Parenting (by Tim Kimmel) offers a refreshing new look at parenting. Rejecting rigid rules and checklists that don’t work, Dr. Kimmel recommends a parenting style that mirrors God’s love, reflects His forgiveness, and displaces fear as a motivator for behavior. As we embrace the grace God offers, we begin to give it- creating a solid foundation for growing morally strong and spiritually motivated children.

The Handbook on Choosing Your Child's Education: A Personalized Plan for Every Age and Stage (from Focus on the Family) helps readers survey today’s educational choices and then make an informed decision about the best path for their children. Features include a checklist to determine individual pros and cons for each child, reproducible worksheets, a resource list, and Frequently Asked Questions. The book also includes information on children with special needs and gifted children.