

YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOLING OPTIONS

**Parents are the gatekeepers and ultimate decision makers for their children.
As you evaluate the many schooling options available to your family,
reflect on the following questions and apply prayer and Biblical
wisdom to your educational choices.**

QUESTION ONE

Who Has Ultimate Responsibility?

- **What is your role?**
- **What part do you play in what they learn and how they find their place in the world?**
- **How are you going to help shape their worldview?**

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."*

We usually associate this verse with a child's spiritual instruction, but the principle applies equally to character and academic training.

Parents have found value working with other people (including schools) to partner toward a strong education. Delegation does not remove the responsibility for oversight. It takes diligence to make sure those who partner with you in the education of your children reinforce rather than undermine your efforts.

QUESTION TWO

What is Best for Each Child?

How parents educate their children is one of the biggest decisions they face. It is a highly personal choice, demanding consideration of the factors unique to each child and family. The challenge is to find the optimal learning environment; one child may thrive in the public-school system, another may learn best in a private school or a home-school setting. It may be best for your child to start with one educational choice for elementary and change to a different system for middle school or high school. As steward of your child's education, it is important to investigate and evaluate all available options: public, private, charter, and home-schooling.

It is important to weigh the positives and negatives. For instance, many public schools (depending on your school district) maintain excellent standards of education and environment; private schools may offer a smaller teacher to student ratio, or a more nurturing environment, but one may not be close to your home or within your family's budget; charter schools can appeal to certain learning styles, but there may not be one available in your community; and home-schooling can offer security, stability, flexibility, and a more hands-on approach, but not all families can meet the demands of this choice. When deciding which option is best for you, take time to consider the abilities, temperament and special needs of your child, the quality of the schools in your area, the stability of your home and your financial situation.

QUESTION THREE

How Do We Keep Faith a Priority?

- **Everyone wants his or her child to succeed in life, but what does success look like?**
- **Does getting into a great college and then landing a dream job define success?**
- **Is it about being well-rounded with skills in a broad range of extracurricular activities?**

Too often, well-meaning parents seeking to give their children an edge for the future fill their schedules with activities that can squeeze out time for family and faith. However, investment in family time that deepens the roots of faith, character and relationships is foundational to real success in life.

QUESTION FOUR

Who Can Give Advice and Guidance?

It is always wise to ask those who have chosen different schooling options (including public, charter, online, private, home education, dual credit programs, etc.) for insights on the pros and cons of each. Since all of us tend to advocate the option we have chosen, you may encounter those who seem to have a “one size fits all” perspective. Just listen and learn so that you can gain as much insight as possible as you prayerfully evaluate your own child’s situation.

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GOING FURTHER

RESOURCES

*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.

*Education a la Carte: Choosing the Best Schooling
Options for Your Child* by Dr. Kevin Leman

Explains the pros and cons of various schooling options so that parents can make an informed choice about the kind of education that will help their child thrive.
