

10 Tips for Choosing the Right Jr. High School for Your Child

The junior high years can be challenging for both students and their parents. Increased academic expectations, a growing sense of independence and complicated social dynamics often make the junior high years a little awkward.

Identifying the right jr. high school for your child is one of the most important decisions you'll make as a parent during these critical years. As you prepare, consider these 10 tips for choosing the right jr. high school for your child.

1. Investigate Several Jr. High Options

Many parents incorrectly believe their only option is their assigned public jr. high or middle school. In most cases, several quality options exist for your student. Before making a decision, consider investigating *at least three options*, which may include private or charter schools in your area, in addition to your public school options.

2. Identify Your Priorities

What special interests or needs does your student possess? What does your child need to succeed for a lifetime? What does your family value? Choose a school that aligns with your academic, social and spiritual goals for your child.

3. Meet the Principal

A 30-minute conversation with the principal will tell you a lot about the school and its approach to partnership with parents. Some principals suggest they do not have time to meet with every prospective parent, but only a few intentional parents will seek such a conversation. Be one of them. Come prepared with questions about curriculum, communication, discipline and how the school seeks to meet the individualized needs of its students.

4. Discover Opportunities Beyond the Classroom

Academics are only a portion of the jr. high experience. Extra-curricular activities, athletics, community service and outside learning opportunities are instrumental to a well-rounded school experience. Discover what each school has to offer before making a decision.

5. Walk the Halls

There is no substitute for touring a school when students are present. Make note of the tone of exchanges between students and teachers, the quality and content of student work, the vibe of the building along with the respect level demonstrated throughout the school. These are important nuances of a quality school experience.

6. Learn How the School Navigates Social & Emotional Dynamics

Emotional intelligence is a long-term predictor of success in the life of a child. Smart parents seek a school partner that will offer a place where their child will be loved and encouraged well during this awkward phase. How does the school develop interpersonal skills? How do teachers and staff equip students to work hard, manage themselves well, rebound from disappointment and develop healthy ways of operating that will prepare them for life?

7. Clarify Class Size

Most students typically learn best in class sizes of 17-25. In what class size does your child tend to thrive?

8. Ask Your Student

Asking your son or daughter for input builds cooperation and trust in your relationship. While students don't possess the wisdom to make a school decision alone, their input matters. Pick their brains and talk together about important matters, including school choice.

9. Learn About Adolescence

Become a student of the adolescent years. Understanding what occurs in the heart, mind and body a middle schooler will give you a distinct advantage as a parent. This is a crazy time in the life of a student, bearing a resemblance to the toddler years only in a teenage body. Get to know the subtleties of what's happening with your child.

10. Trust Your Instincts

After asking great questions and investigating the options, trust your instincts. You're an expert when it comes to your student. Choose the school that seems the best fit for your child and your family.

At Springfield Christian School, we are committed to walking alongside parents as they attempt to determine the best school fit for their child. If we can serve your family in any way, please contact us any time at scs@scs.school or [\(217\) 698-1933](tel:2176981933).



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