### Family Needs Summary

**How to Use This Summary:**

- Use this checklist to help identify your family's most important characteristics for choosing a school. If needed, you'll find more help identifying your family's needs in *Picky Parent Guide*.
- Write an "M" in the square box beside needs that are Must Haves: truly essential for your child's school to address. Most families will have a small number of Must Haves.
- Write an "N" in the square box beside other needs that are Nice to Haves: not essential, but helpful for school to address.
- Leave empty boxes beside items not important for choosing a school for your child, because either (1) an item is not important for your family or (2) you do not need school to address an item.
- Record Must Haves and top Nice to Haves on your *Personalized Great Fit Checklist*.

### What Your Child Learns

**Values about what content is important:** a Must Have if you strongly value a subject and need for school to cover it. Mark Must Haves ("M") and Nice to Haves ("N") below:

- Core academic subjects (reading, writing, math)
- Other academic subjects (foreign language, etc. – make your own list of subjects you value)
- Morals, ethics, character, religion
- Other non-academic: social, emotional and physical development
- Other topics important to you

**Goals for your child:** a Must Have if one of these is your goal for your child, and your child is at risk of not meeting the goal (if goal is learning a particular subject, use *Values about content* above). Mark Must Haves ("M") and Nice to Haves ("N") below:

- Grade progression: child at risk of failing required subject or not meeting standard for grade progression
- Academic performance: child is capable of performing above grade level but at risk of not achieving potential
- College opportunity: you want child to attend college and child is capable, but child at risk of not achieving goal

### How Your Child Learns

- **Values about school-wide expectations and rules on student conduct:** a Must Have if you have strong opinions about school rules on children's social behavior, especially if
  1. your time with your child is very limited or
  2. you have difficulty teaching the religious, moral or ethical lessons you want your child to learn or
  3. child is very susceptible to peer influence or
  4. you are very concerned about values and behaviors your child is adopting at current school

Check expectations and rules important to you below:

- Manners with other children and adults
- Honor code
- Dress
- Discipline
- Other behaviors

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VALUES ABOUT HOW CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN: a Must Have if you have a strong opinion about how children should be taught and behavior managed in school

- **Teaching method** (check preferred method below)
  - Teacher directed: teachers transmit their knowledge directly to students and guide student activities in detail
  - Student discovery: teachers help students figure out new knowledge for themselves and choose own activities
  - Mixed approach: some of both teacher directed and student discovery learning

- **Classroom behavior management** (check preferred method below)
  - Controlling/Strict: teachers maintain order through clear rules, rewards and consequences
  - Developmental: maintain order by coaching and developing students' self-control; use peer and parental pressure
  - Mixed approach: some of both controlling/strict and developmental approaches

YOUR ROLE AS ADVOCATE FOR YOUR CHILD: a Must Have if you have difficulty understanding and communicating your child’s needs to teachers and principal (because of time constraints, lack of confidence, language barriers, cultural differences, or other reasons)

SOCIAL ISSUES

- **Parent Community**: a Must Have if you want your child’s school to have parents with particular characteristics (make a list and check preferred items below)
  - Friends: Parents you already know?
  - Neighbors: Neighborhood parents?
  - Location: Parents from a particular neighborhood other than your own?
  - Values: Same values as you? Which values?
  - Social behavior and manners: Ways you want, or don’t want, other parents to act?
  - Social and economic status: Do you have preferences about the diversity or makeup of the parent community?
  - Race and ethnicity: Do you have preferences about the diversity or makeup of the parent community?

- **Parent Involvement**: a Must Have if you have a strong preference about the level and type of parent involvement in your child’s school, including (check preferences, if any)
  - Helping: helping with school’s daily life (e.g., volunteering for classroom activities, media center, field trips)
  - Decision making (e.g., volunteering as member of school advisory or governing board)
  - Fundraising activities (see last item below, Money, about your own donation dollar amounts)

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### Social Issues...continued

- **Student Community:** a Must Have if you want your child’s school to have students with particular characteristics (make a list and check preferred items below)
  - Friends: Want to keep your child with current friends? Seeking new friends for your child?
  - Neighbors: Your child’s neighbors?
  - Location: Students from a particular neighborhood other than your own?
  - Values: Same values as you? Which values?
  - Social behavior and manners: Ways you want, or don’t want, other students to act?
  - Student achievement: Higher, lower or same-performing students compared to your child?
  - Social and economic status: Preferences about the diversity or makeup of the student body?
  - Race and ethnicity: Preferences about the diversity or makeup of the student body?
  - Gender diversity: Do you want an all-boys or all-girls program for your child?
  - Other student characteristics you do or do not want?

- **I Want My Child to Attend a Certain School, School Type, or School Design:** a Must Have only if you would choose a certain school type (e.g., public, private, religious) or design over a different school of better quality and fit

### Practical Matters

- **Child Care:** a Must Have if you do not have other affordable child care options for hours needed
  - Before and after school
  - Holidays and Summer

- **Schedule:** a Must Have if you have unchangeable commitments (e.g., work, other children’s schedules) and can not use transportation or child care to accommodate a different schedule
  - Daily hours
  - Yearly (start/finish and holidays)

- **Transportation:** a Must Have if you have unchangeable commitments preventing you from providing transportation and you cannot use non-school transport (e.g., carpool, city bus)
  - To school and home from school
  - After school activities

- **Location:** a Must Have if you need to have your child’s school near work or home (e.g., you have time or transportation constraints, or you plan to visit your child’s school very frequently)

- **Your Other Children:** a Must Have if you definitely do or do not want child to go to same school as siblings. Same or different schools? _________________

- **Money Available to Pay for School:** a Must Have if money available to pay, including possible scholarships or vouchers, is less than most expensive school option

  - Current $: 1
  - Target $: 2
  - Maximum $: 3

  1 Current: Amount you actually spend on education now (tuition, fees, child care, supplies, gifts, donations)
  2 Target: Amount you could spend without major changes in work, lifestyle or debt (may be same as Curr. or Max.)
  3 Maximum: Most you are willing to spend, with acceptable changes in work, lifestyle and debt.

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