



# Elementary School: Which Option is Right for Your Child?

Learn about different options available to your child when it's time for them to start elementary school.

## Traditional public school:

**Adhere to rules of curriculum, policy and governance, decided at the local and state level.**

Teachers must have the appropriate licensure to work at a public school, which is usually mandated by their state.

Students attend a public school based on where they live and aren't required to pay tuition.

## Alternative types of public schools:

Magnet schools are free public schools operated by school districts that allow kids to focus on a specific learning track such as: areas of science, technology, engineering, mathematics, medical science and performing arts.

Virtual schooling may be an option.

## Charter school:

**Offer unique learning environments, such as science classes conducted in the field, or specialization in arts education.**

Like traditional public schools, charter schools are free.

Parents must usually submit a separate application to enroll a child in a charter school.

Spaces are often limited.

Charter schools often choose a specialization or mission statement that meets a need of their community.

Teachers and administrators at charter schools have more authority to make decisions than most traditional public schools, and the cost of that freedom is a constant pressure to perform.

## Homeschool:

**Parents/caregivers lead education in the home.**

There were about 3.1 million homeschool students in 2021-2022 in grades K-12 in the United States (roughly 6% of school-age children).

Homeschool students score above average on achievement tests, regardless of their parents' level of formal education or their family's household income.

Determine your state's homeschooling laws and requirements: [Homeschool Laws By State \(hslsda.org\)](https://hslsda.org).

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## Private school:

### **Educational institutions that operate independently of government control.**

Private schools are known for their emphasis on quality education, smaller class sizes and individualized attention given to students.

They are not bound by the same regulations and guidelines as public schools, providing them more flexibility to design their curriculum and shape their learning environment.

Types of private schools include religious, single-sex or co-educational, and boarding or day schools.

Admission process includes application and interview and tuition and financial aid option review.

Tuition fees for private schools can vary widely. Private schools often provide scholarships, grants or tuition assistance programs to make education accessible to a diverse range of students.

## Therapeutic day school:

### **Specialized educational institution designed to provide a supportive learning environment for students with emotional, behavioral or mental health challenges.**

Common principles include therapy integration into education, small class sizes, positive reinforcements and transition planning.

Crucial part of a residential treatment plan to help teens transition back into the regular school system with new skills and tools to tackle everyday stressors and challenges.

**Please reference therapeutic treatment tip sheet for treatment modalities.**

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