

If the preschool fits: Part 3



In searching for a school for our son Frank, who has developmental delays, we found it difficult to find a warm and safe place where he can play and learn. Here is the story of one of our visits on the “preschool tour.”

Read Part 1 [here](#).

Read Part 2 [here](#).

A week after a disappointing visit to a church preschool, Frank and I visited another preschool (not church affiliated) for their open house. From the very beginning, the program director pushed the hard sell.

“Which program are you interested in? When is his birthday? Did you know that we offer daycare?” were the first questions she asked. (I don’t think she ever even asked our names.)

She escorted us into a classroom where two teachers were dancing with the class. Frank wasn’t interested and began investigating the toys in the classroom. His back was turned to us, and the lady said, “Frank, let’s go take a look at our beautiful playground.” He was sorting through a tool set, arranging everything neatly. She repeated herself, frustrated. I grabbed Frank, who kicked and screamed his way outside until he saw a basketball court.

“What do you think of this school, Frank? Do you want to come here?” she said. But, he was off.

“He has a receptive language delay,” I explained, “So, sometimes he has trouble understanding us.”

Suddenly, the dollar signs over our heads waned.

“Excuse me,” she said, abandoning me for another family. I let Frank play basketball for a few minutes, expecting her to come back. She didn’t, so I rounded up Frank once more, kicking and screaming even harder this time, and told her we were leaving.

She handed me a glossy packet full of photographs that looked staged.

“Thanks for coming by!” she said with the enthusiasm of a worn-out flight attendant.

I was defeated. Maybe Frank wasn't ready for school. Maybe school wasn't ready for Frank. Like any parent, I want what's best for my child. Like any parent of a child with special needs, our "best" is hard to find. Sometimes we feel unwanted. I decided a long time ago that if I'm not wanted somewhere to move on, but where?

Part 4 of this four-part series will go online on June 9.