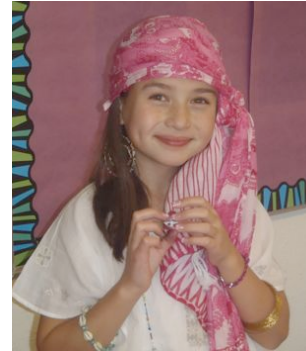


# Does Your Child's School Fit? By Patricia Garner, Principal

During my many years of giving school tours and open houses, I am frequently asked the same two question by parents: “How do I know if this is the right school for my child?” and “Will this school meet my child’s needs, academically, emotionally, socially and physically?”



A few years ago, I began answering those questions by suggesting to parents that choosing a school for their child is like choosing a pair of shoes. Do they want a school because it looks good from the outside? Will they choose a school because they *want* to make it fit...even though some aspects of the program don't feel good?

I suggest that parents choose a school that will celebrate the uniqueness and the spirit of their child. And, that they should consider using fitting shoes as a model for their child's educational experience. Every parent looks



for a good solid educational foundation (the sole of the shoe) so that their child can build lifelong experiences based on an effective curriculum. The design of the school (the shoe 'upper') equates to the individual needs and uniqueness of each child. What is the class size? Are there electives and independent studies? You can choose styles ranging from a formal wingtip to a sporty design. Most importantly, *does it fit?*

Does the shoe allow room to grow?

Often, parents tell me that their child's preschool that worked for a few years isn't working anymore. Yes, children *do* outgrow school programs, just as they do their shoes. The design may need to change with each child's growth and development.



When parents tour our school, I always encourage them to sign their child up for a visit day to explore and experience the school's educational program firsthand. It is like walking around



the shoe store before you buy. Sometimes it may even take more than a one-day visit for parents and children to reach a comfort level.



The school program that you are considering for your child should offer you the opportunity to "try it on."

Remember, one size does *not* fit all. For you and your child, it may be time to go shoe shopping...oh, I mean school shopping! Does *your* child's school fit?



Patricia Garner is the Principal at Broomfield Academy. She has taught first through eighth grades for over 30 years in both public and private school settings. For the last 20 years her special focus has been in teaching gifted children and the twice-exceptional. Mrs. Garner attended Rhode Island College where she received her B.S. in Elementary Education and Special Education. She also attended the University of Rhode Island where she earned her Master's Equivalency in Elementary Education. She currently holds a lifetime Teaching License in the State of Rhode Island. In addition, she holds a Colorado Teaching License and is certified as Director Qualified in Early Childhood education. She founded and ran the Community School for the Gifted for 18 years prior to being Principal of Broomfield Academy.

