



## Things to consider before choosing a kindergarten

1. School choice has increased dramatically over the past decade
2. Parents are no longer committed to having their child attend the local neighborhood school
3. Increase in choice also means increase in parental awareness and involvement in children's education
4. Each child and family is unique and has different wants and needs
5. A school may be a right fit for one family, but not a right fit for another



## Things to consider before choosing a kindergarten, cont'd

### 1. Practical issues

- a. Schedule to accommodate work and family
- b. Before- and/or after-school care
- c. Special learning needs

### 2. Personal beliefs

- a. Traditional vs. Progressive
- b. Familial vs. Formal
- c. Diversity vs. Uniformity



**What school choices  
do families have in LA County?**

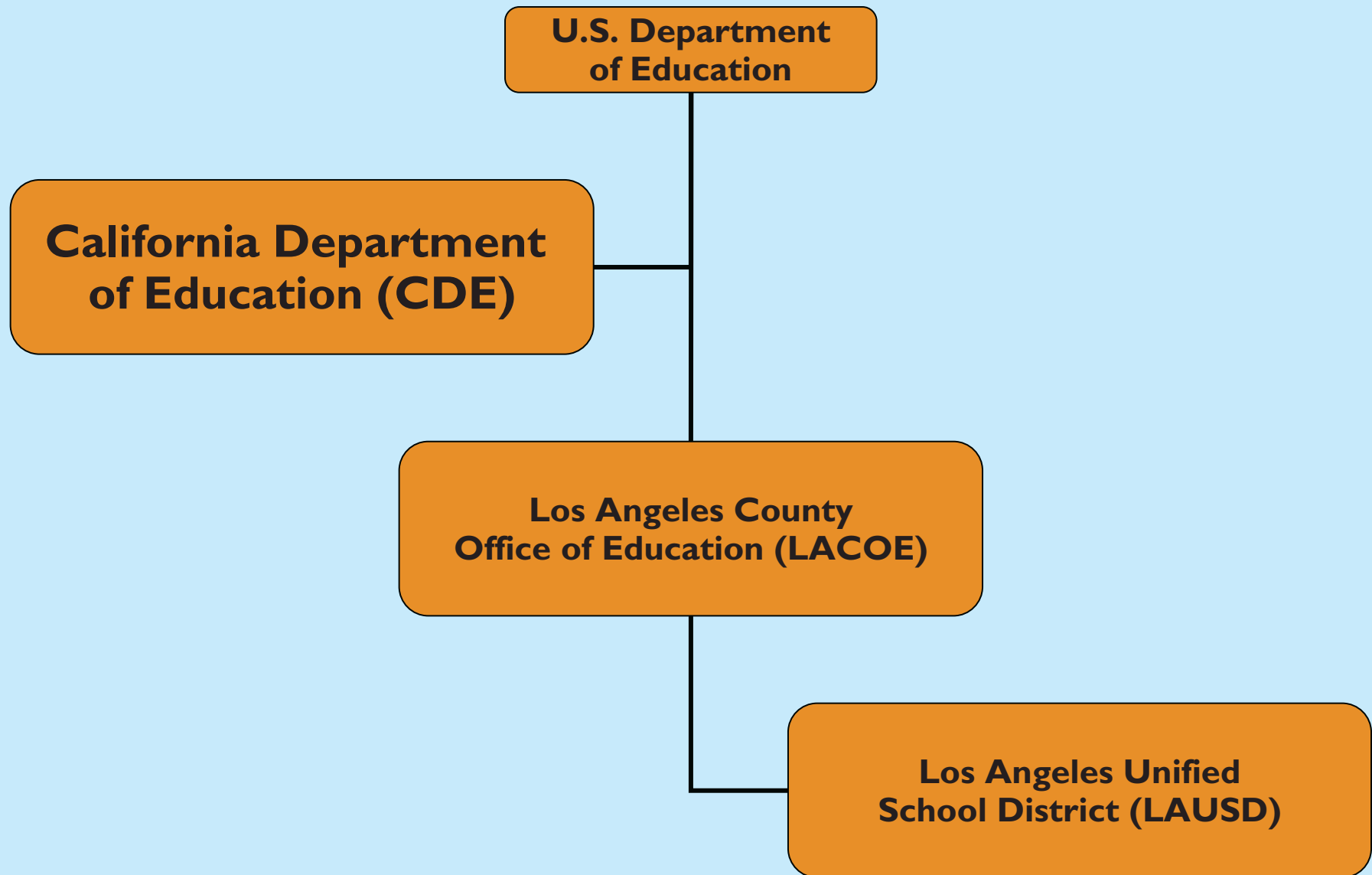


## Public Schools

- Public schools belong to a local school district (e.g. LAUSD)
- School districts belong to a local county education office (e.g. LACOE)
- County education offices answer to the state department of education (e.g. CDE)
- State department of education answer to the federal department of education (US Department of Ed.)



## Public Schools, cont'd





## Public Schools, cont'd

- Funding of public schools comes from federal, state, and local taxes; no parent-paid tuition
- Standards also come from federal (NCLB) and state (grade-level standards) government
- Testing in public schools begins in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade
- Testing is used to hold schools accountable for public funding





## Public Schools, cont'd

- School districts oversee individual schools in their area (e.g. elementary, junior high, high school)
- The largest school district in LA County is LAUSD with 453 elementary schools
- The smallest school district in LA County is Gorman School District with 1 elementary school
- Curriculum includes a general program of study such as Language Arts, Math, Science, History, and Physical Education



## Public Schools, cont'd

- Children living within the school district boundaries are assigned to a school of residence
- School of residence is based on children's address
- Inter-district permits allow for children to attend a school outside of their district
- Intra-district permits allow for children to attend another school within their district; automatically renewed
- Open enrollment allows for children (and in most cases their siblings) to attend another school within their district; not automatically renewed



## Charter Schools

- Public schools
- Can be any combination from grades K-12
- Must meet CDE public school regulations/criteria
- Often created or organized by a group of teachers, parents, community-leaders and/or organizations
- Can be sponsored by local public school board or county office of education board as an “authorizer”\*
- Goals and operating procedures are outlined in an agreement (charter) between all involved parties

*\*Authorizers of charter schools help operate and monitor their performance. Parents can ask authorizers of charter schools for a copy of a charter school’s performance report..*



## Charter Schools, cont'd

- Innovative teaching is attractive to many families\*
- Can have special focuses such as arts and science
- Participates in and accountable for state-testing
- Admissions process cannot be discriminatory
- Enrollment is not governed by neighborhood or school district boundaries; parents can apply to more than one charter school
- Lottery system used to determine acceptance when there are more applicants than available slots

*\* Although research shows that some children thrive in charter schools, it cannot be concluded that children who attend charter schools have higher test scores/are better educated. This supports the idea that parents should assess and know their child and select the right school accordingly.*



## Magnet Schools

- Public schools
- Court-ordered voluntary integration programs
- In addition to general public school curriculum, offer students a particular focus of study such as performing arts or math & science
- Can have different instructional structure such as mixed-age classrooms or year-round calendars
- Not governed by neighborhood boundaries
- Applications are often processed earlier than general public school enrollment; contact local school district for more information



## Alternative Options to Public School

- California law states that children ages 6-18\* must attend school
- If parents do not send their children to school, the alternatives are:
  - Independent Study Program
  - Home School
  - Private School
- All alternative forms of education must abide by regulations from state, county and local school districts, as well as law enforcement authorities

*\* This does not include teenagers who have graduated high school or passed the CA H.S. Proficiency Examination*



## Independent Study

- Offered through most local public school districts, charter schools, or county offices of education
- Allows students to continue public school education outside the traditional classroom
- Credentialed school teacher
- Instruction must be at least 3 hours per day, 175 days per calendar year, and align with grade level expectations/standards/curriculum
- Children with IEP's may participate



## Home Schools

- Top reasons why parents choose to home school:
  - To give children a better education
  - To develop moral character
  - To abide by personal beliefs (e.g. religion)
- Valid credential must be held by the teacher, whether it is the parent or hired tutor
- Teaching methodology, curriculum, and hours of instruction can be personalized to each child
- Many public school districts support home schooling through resources, elective courses and other forms of partnership



## Private School

- Funded by tuition, private donations and/or grants
- Admissions criteria may include testing & interviews
- Independent operating procedures
- May include religious study as part of curriculum
- Must have an approved standing with the CDE\*
- Required by CDE to provide instruction in English and cover topics that are covered in public schools
- Not required by CDE to hire credentialed teachers or participate in state-wide testing

\* Private School Affidavit or compliance with Education Code Section 33190



## 5 steps to consider before choosing a kindergarten program for your child

1. Find out your child's school of residence
2. Research other schools in your neighborhood (e.g. school statistics, parent involvement, etc.) and make a list of favorites
3. Visit the schools on your list; schedule visits to kindergarten classroom and meet principal
4. Find answers to questions about schools such as curriculum, discipline policy, outdoor play time, teaching methods, parent-involvement, etc.
5. Submit completed applications by their deadlines



## Wrap-up and Questions

