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PLIGHT OF THE PRESCHOOLERS How do they beat the odds?

Competition for admission to the country's top private schools has always been tough, but this year Elisabeth Krents realized it had reached a new level. Her wake-up call came when a man called the Dalton School in Manhattan, where Krents is admissions director, and inquired about the age cutoff for their kindergarten program. After providing the information (they don't use an age cutoff), she asked about the age of his child. The man paused for an uncomfortably long time before answering. "Well, we don't have a child yet," he told Krents. "We're trying to figure out when to conceive a child so the birthday is not a problem." School obsession is spreading from Manhattan to the rest of the country. Precise current data on private schools are unavailable, but interviews with representatives of independent and religious schools all told the same story: a glut of applicants, higher rejection rates. "We have people calling us for spots two years down the road," said Marilyn Collins of the Seven Hills School in Cincinnati. "We have grandparents calling for pregnant daughters." Public-opinion poll after poll indicates that Americans' No. 1 concern is education. Now that the long economic boom has given parents more disposable income, many are turning to private schools, even at price tags of well over \$10,000 a year. "We're getting applicants from a broader area,

geographically, than we ever have in the past," said Betsy Haugh of the Latin School of Chicago, which experienced a 20 percent increase in applications this year. The problem for the applicants is that while demand has increased, supply has not. "Every year, there are a few children who do not find places, but this year, for the first time that I know of, there are a significant number of children who don't have places," said Krents, who also heads a private-school admissions group in New York. So what can parents do to give their 4-year-old an edge? Schools know there is no foolproof way to pick a class when children are so young. Many schools give preference to siblings or alumni children. Some use lotteries. But most rely on a mix of subjective and objective measures: tests that at best identify developmental maturity and cognitive potential, interviews with parents and observation of applicants in classroom settings. They also want a diverse mix. Children may end up on a waiting list simply because their birthdays fall at the wrong time of year, or because too many applicants were boys. The worst thing a parent can do is to pressure preschoolers to perform--for example, by pushing them to read or do math exercises before they're ready. Instead, the experts say, parents should take a breath and look for alternatives. Another year in preschool may be all that's needed. Parents, meanwhile, may need a more open mind about relatively unknown private schools--or about magnet schools in the public system. There's no sign of the private-school boom letting up. Dalton's spring tours, for early birds interested in the 2001-2002 school year, are filled. The wait list? Forget it. That's closed, too. By Pat Wingert Newsweek.

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1. The author uses the examples to show \_\_\_\_\_. [A] the concern of Americans [B] the charm of the private schools [C] the fierce situation for preschoolers [D] the economic situation of American families

2. What is implied in Paragraph 4? [A] The harsh way of forming a class. [B] The high expectation of the parents. [C] The wise selection of the school. [D] The difficulty of getting enrolled.

3. The author's attitude toward this event is \_\_\_\_\_. [A] indifferent [B] apprehensive [C] supportive [D] indignant

4. Instead of giving their children great pressure to outperform, the parents should \_\_\_\_\_. [A] avoid the competition and wait for another year [B] give up their first choice and go to the unknown school [C] let their children be and do what they want to do [D] deal with the matter more casually and rethink the situation

5. The text intends to express \_\_\_\_\_. [A] the popularity of the private schools [B] parents' worry about their children's schooling [C] the plight of the preschoolers [D] the severe competition in going to school

篇章剖析 本文采用提出问题---分析问题的模式。文章以实例作为切入点，着重阐述了学龄前儿童所面临的困境。第一段和第二段指出家长对子女教育问题的关注；第三段指出儿童入学难这一现象及其原因；第四段指出一些学校的招生办法以及有些学生无法入学的原因；第五段指出父母应该怎么做。

词汇注释 wake-up call (宾馆提供的) 唤醒服务，叫早服务 kindergarten [kɪndɜːrˈɡɑːtən] n. 幼儿园 adj. 幼儿园的，初级的，启蒙阶段的 figure out v. 合计为，计算出，解决，断定，领会到 conceive

[kEn5si:v] v. 怀孕, 考虑, 设想 obsession [Eb5seF(E)n] n. 迷住, 困扰 glut [^lQt] n. 供应过剩; 充斥 edge [edV] n. 刀口, 利刃, 锋, 优势, 边缘, 优势, 尖锐 give an edge to 加剧, 使尖锐化; 鼓舞, 使兴奋; 给(刀等)开刃, 使锋利 foolproof [5fu:lpru:f] adj. 十分简单的, 十分安全的, 极坚固的 sibling [5sblIIN] n. 兄弟, 姐妹, 同胞, 同属 alumni [E^lQmnaI] n. pl. 男毕业生, 男校友 lottery [5lRtErI] n. 抽彩给奖法 cognitive [ `kC^nlIv ] adj. 认知的, 认识的, 有感知的 diverse [daI5v\ :s] adj. 不同的, 变化多的 alternative [C:l5t\ :nEtIv] n. 二中择一, 可供选择的办法, 事物 adj. 选择性的 boom [bu:m] n. 繁荣, 隆隆声 let up v. 停止, 中止, 放松 难句突破 1. But most rely on a mix of subjective and objective measures: tests that at best identify developmental maturity and cognitive potential, interviews with parents and observation of applicants in classroom settings. 主体句式: most rely on a mix of subjective and objective measures... 结构分析: 本句是一个简单句。冒号之后的成分做measures的同位语; tests, interviews和observation属于并列结构。 句子译文: 但大多数学校还是用主观和客观结合的方法: 进行考试, 确定孩子的发育成熟程度和认知潜能; 同学生家长面谈, 或在教室观察孩子的反应能力。 题目分析 1. 答案为C, 属事实细节题。文中头两段举例说明子女教育问题成了美国家庭的头等大事, 由此引发学龄前儿童入学难这一社会问题。 2. 答案为A, 属推理判断题。第四段阐述了学校选学生的一些倾向和做法。对于一个几岁的孩子及其家长又是主观考察, 又是客观考察, 又是抽签, 还要考虑班里学生的多样性, 等等。对于孩子来讲, 真是有些勉为其难。 3. 答案为B, 属情感态度题。全文表达了对学龄前儿童的关注, 以及对他们所处

环境的忧虑和担心。 4.答案为D，属事实细节题。原文对应信息“ Instead, the experts say, parents should take a breath and look for alternatives.” 5.答案为C，属中心思想题。全文的中心都围绕着学龄前儿童所处的困境这一点。 100Test 下载频道开通，各类考试题目直接下载。详细请访问 [www.100test.com](http://www.100test.com)