

A Quality Education: The Earlier, the Better  
By Dr. Vanessa Ewing

It is not uncommon for people to come to me, as Principal of a private elementary school, and ask “why would I pay a lot of money for my child to be in preschool or kindergarten?” or for parents to ask “Don’t I need to save my money for college expenses, rather than to spend it on their primary education?” The fact is, if we do not start our children off on the right foot academically, assuring that they are learning all they can when they are little, college may or may not be an option. It is in the very first few years of school when children develop their most valuable and reusable academic skills and their core academic beliefs. If a child is bored or under-challenged during the first few years of school, parents or teachers will be hard pressed to change their minds later on in life.

Research has clearly shown that the first years of life are the most important time for a child’s neurological development. By the end of preschool, a child’s brain is nearly 90% the weight of an adult size brain (Schuster & Ashburn, 1986; Nihart, 1993; House, 2007). A high-quality preschool-aged program gives children clear academic and social benefits (Belsky et al., 2007). Although school systems in other parts of the world generally acknowledge this fact, in the United States our system still devotes the least resources to our youngest and potentially most precious members of our society (Lamm et al., 1992).

At Broomfield Academy, **students** are given an educational experience that helps them both academically and socially. In addition to individualized and developmentally appropriate challenging academic classes in language arts, math and science, students are working with a number of specialty teachers in world language, art, technology, physical education and music. Broomfield Academy teachers utilize a wide variety of challenging, research-based curricula to help their students learn and have a great experience in the process. This does not mean that the students experience is an “all work, no play” type of program. On the contrary, Broomfield Academy students go on monthly field trips, participate in Mad Science projects and enjoy parties, crafts, and celebrations throughout the year. We expect each and every student to be excited about the work and activities they are doing in school – sad if they should ever miss a class.

At Broomfield Academy, **parents** are also dedicated to their child’s education. We see this every day through their partnership with our school in a variety of ways, including volunteerism in our school, attendance at school events and celebrations, and a high level of communication and collaboration with our teaching staff. **Teachers** at Broomfield Academy have many years of successful classroom experience and ongoing continuing education and training in the education field. In addition, many have additional degrees or certifications in complementary areas such as reading or art. Of course, degrees do not mean anything without the love and passion for the children we teach. We are proud to have teachers that have such skill in the classroom.

When students leave Broomfield Academy, they typically go on to attend the most rigorous programs with advanced placement options, gifted and talented programming, or International Baccalaureate programming. They continue to be student leaders, active in community service, the arts and sciences, athletic and dramatic programs.

Starting out in the best possible elementary school program does not guarantee a child is going to be in a particular college or will get a scholarship later in life, but it does give them the very best opportunity to explore and be ready for those options.

Dr. Vanessa Ewing

Education Advisor and past-Principal, Broomfield Academy, (303) 469-6449

For more information, contact Patricia Garner, Principal at [principal@broomfieldacademy.com](mailto:principal@broomfieldacademy.com)  
<http://www.broomfieldacademy.com>

Broomfield Academy is a small nationally accredited high quality private elementary and middle school located in Broomfield. It serves students in Junior Kindergarten through eighth grade (ages 3-14). It offers small class sizes, individualized student learning plans and accelerated curriculum programs to help our children reach their fullest potential. In addition to a very strong core academic program, the school offers specialty courses to all students in Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, music, art, technology and physical education. The school offers full and part-day Academic Preschool, an accredited full-day Kindergarten, elementary school (grades 1-4) and middle school (grades 5-8) as well as an extended day school program for children of all ages.

Biography: Dr. Vanessa Ewing received her Ph.D. in Educational Psychology with an emphasis in Individual Differences in Cognition from the University of Northern Colorado. She has taught students aged 4-18 in traditional classroom settings, specializing as both a special education teacher and as a gifted and talented coordinator. For over a decade she has presented at numerous regional and national psychology and education conferences. In addition, Dr. Ewing has served as an instructor for graduate and undergraduate level teacher education and psychology courses at numerous colleges in the Denver metropolitan area. Vanessa is the Education Advisor and past-Principal at Broomfield Academy. Broomfield Academy's mission is to provide individualized programming for children helping them to be exceptional, accelerated and creative students. In addition to academic programming, service learning and character education are a part of the school curriculum.

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