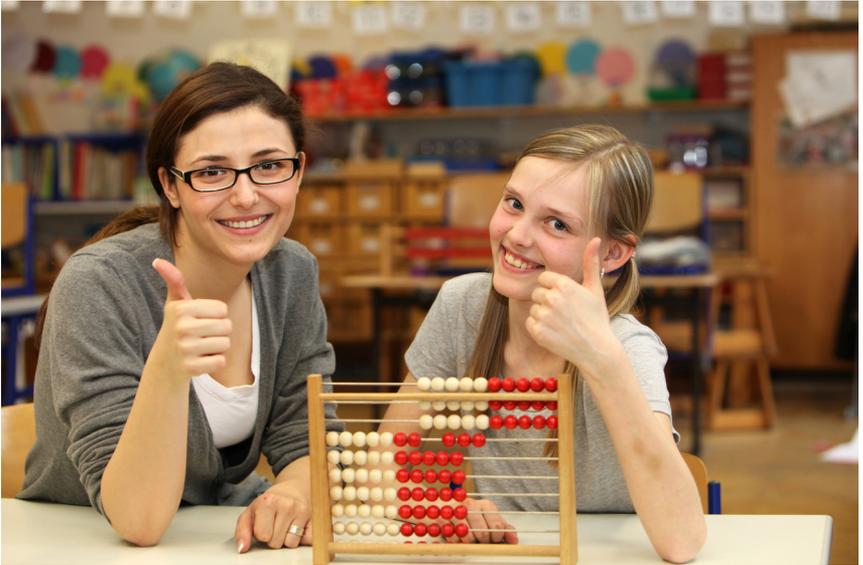


Parent's Guide to Tutoring



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Dear Parent,

Choosing a tutor for your child is not easy. I wrote this guide to help you better understand tutoring. In this fact – filled booklet, you will discover the five types of tutoring, the twelve questions needed to determine if your child needs a tutor, five areas to evaluate a potential tutor, fourteen questions to ask a potential tutor, eleven things that tutors need to know from you, and six things to expect from a tutor. Now, with this information, you can make an informed, intelligent decision to find a qualified, competent professional.

If you have any questions about tutoring, you are invited to call us. We've dedicated our business to educating parents and students. We will be happy to help in every way.

Cordially,

Rebekah Ricks



*The Homeschool Connection
Tutoring Specialist
"Connecting Home and School"*

5 Types of Tutoring

What type of tutoring does your child need? There are several reasons you may seek tutorial help for your child. Whether it is one need or a combination, it is important to know why you are seeking tutoring in order to identify the best tutor for your child.

You may choose a tutor for the following:

Remediation - Often when a surprising report card comes home or after a parent teacher conference, you are faced with the realization that your child is not doing well in school, and want to help. Remedial sessions most often focus on filling gaps in specific skills in specific subjects, usually in math, reading or writing. As more basic skills are mastered, tutoring sessions can be spent teaching more grade-level skills, thereby increasing the student's achievement and self-esteem.

Maintenance - Perhaps your student is beginning a new school or moving from elementary to middle school and suddenly finds the work to be different, more time consuming, or demanding. New routines or teacher expectations may quickly overwhelm your student. More often, the goals of these tutoring sessions are devoted to helping the student learn more effective time management skills, understand their new academic responsibilities, complete homework, and help the student transition into an independent learner.

Support Tutoring - This is a mix of remediation and maintenance. This is particularly useful for students who are working below grade level. This approach allows approximately half of the session to be devoted to remediation and deficient skill areas. The remaining half is devoted to maintenance and helping the student from

5 Types of Tutoring (continued)

getting any further behind by working on classroom assignments and textbook review.

Enrichment - If it is clear that your child is functioning successfully at grade level, and he is comfortable with more challenges, it may be appropriate to seek a tutor to help accelerate skills development in certain subjects or skill area.

Test Prep - The SAT, ACT, EOC and FCAT have never been more misunderstood or caused so much anxiety among students, especially high school students trying to get into the college of their choice. You should choose a tutor who has a strong background in test-taking strategies and who understands the most recent content of the test. Skills development and support is often an integral part of a test-prep course or tutoring program. Providing this type of assistance frequently alleviates test-taking anxiety and promotes confidence in tackling this important assessment.

5 Areas to Evaluate a Potential Tutor

The following areas should be considered when you are choosing a tutor. Talking with potential tutors and determining how he will address each should allow you to decide which tutor will best benefit your child:

Qualifications — Ideally, your tutor is a college graduate who holds a valid teaching certificate granted by a state education agency, or is someone with a college degree who has completed a tutor training program. This presumes the tutor understands educational theory, instructional strategies, and remedial approaches. A respectable training program outlines the basics of planning an effective session, how a student demonstrates

5 Areas to Evaluate a Potential Tutor (continued)

comprehension, and how goals and objectives are to be designed to meet a student's needs. Graduate students with strong content knowledge can make effective tutors if they also have the skills to connect with the student.

Relationship Building - This is critical to the success of the tutoring sessions. A tutor needs to be able to put your child at ease, encourage academic risks, be nonjudgmental, and observant of your child's strengths and weaknesses. The tutor should also build a relationship with you by regularly updating you on the progress of your child.

Achievement - Of course, this is the crux of why you are paying for tutoring in the first place. A tutor needs to be able to demonstrate growth both academically and in the student's attitude toward learning. Pre- and post-testing on standardized tests or school grades can be useful objective measures of progress. A good rule of thumb is after nearly 10 hours of one-to-one tutoring you should be able to notice a tangible benefit from tutoring.

Communication - It is important that you, the consumer, know how your money is being spent. A professional tutor will provide regular feedback on goals and objectives for your child, session content, progress or lack thereof, and plans for future sessions during a time which is convenient for you.

Cost - Often a major factor in selecting a tutor is the cost. Costs vary from region to region and different tutoring models. One-to-one tutoring will be more expensive than small group tutoring, and in-home tutoring will be more costly than traveling to a learning center.

12 Questions to Determine If Your Child Needs a Tutor

First, obtain information from your child's teacher by setting up a conference to discuss skill areas that may require extra instruction or enhancement. Teachers are often able to pinpoint a child's academic strengths and weaknesses, and to recommend procedures and/or materials that may be helpful when working with the child. In making your decision about whether tutoring is needed, it is important to try to get an understanding of whether your child needs more practical opportunities versus more specialized instruction in order to learn the subject matter. This distinction may be helpful when weighing available options and making a decision regarding the best services for your child.

- **Is there a particular subject or type of assignment that almost always gives my child trouble?**
- **Is your child able to communicate effectively?**
- **Is completing homework a recurring battle in my family?**
- **Is your child consistently earning low grades and receiving negative progress reports?**
- **Is there difficulty studying effectively for tests?**
- **Is there trouble with skills such as organizing, planning, or seeing a project through to completion?**
- **Does your child read with fluency (that is, the capacity to read text accurately and quickly) and comprehension?**
- **Is my child unhappy or anxious about schoolwork?**
- **Is your child experiencing difficulty with subject area concepts?**
- **Is your child reading below grade level?**
- **Has my child's teacher (or guidance counselor or learning specialist) suggested tutoring?**
- **Is your child able to plan and organize academic material by himself?**

14 Questions to Ask a Potential Tutor

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Take the time to interview anyone you are considering hiring. Below are some recommended questions, but you should always consider the unique needs of your child and add other questions as you feel relevant:

- **How many years have you been a tutor?**
- **What are your qualifications?**
- **Can you provide references?**
- **What assessments do you conduct?**
- **What supplies and materials do you provide?**
- **What will my child need to provide?**
- **Will you provide private (one-to-one) tutoring?**
- **What is the cost?**
- **Are there additional fees?**
- **Will I have a contract?**
- **How can I get out of the contract?**
- **How will you know what my child's needs are?**
- **Do you have a particular teaching philosophy?**
- **How will you communicate with me?**

11 Things That Tutors Need to Know from You

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Tutors need to understand your child as much as possible to start the sessions in a positive way. Be prepared to share with a potential tutor at least the following information:

- **What seems to motivate your child?**
- **Does your child like school?**
- **What are his favorite subjects? Least favorite?**
- **How is your child's memory?**
- **How does your child feel about being tutored?**
- **Do you have samples of work they can view?**

11 Things That Tutors Need to Know from You *(continued)*

- May they speak to the teacher regarding your child?
- Does the school agree with your assessment of your child?
- How does your child feel about standardized tests? Does he get anxious?
- What are his past standardized test scores like?
- Does your child have any specific organizational/study skill issues?

6 Things to Expect from a Tutor

The following is a list of reasonable expectations for parents who hire a tutor or agency to work with their child. The degree to which these expectations hold true may vary depending on the type of tutoring you select.

- Knowledge of and experience with individualized approaches of instruction
- Coordination between the tutoring and the classroom program
- Realistic and appropriate goals and estimated timeliness for reaching these goals
- A regular report of child progress and outcome data, if available (pre- and post- tests of skills)
- A professional handling of all aspects of the tutoring experience
- Demonstrated gains in skills and abilities targeted through tutoring

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