



## Does Your Child Need a Tutor?

With the start of a new school year, your child may be experiencing some difficulties with the material being presented in their new grade level. No child is the master of every subject, every day, every year in school. Some children need extra help in subjects at different times in their school career. But how do you know if your child needs a tutor? Where do you start looking for one? What questions should you ask? What results should you expect and how soon? Here are some tips to help you make your decision:

**Look for the "signs."** Look out for specific indicators that your child may need tutoring. If your child comes home from school sad or frustrated; if his or her grades begin to slip or homework is taking unusually long; or if you hear your child make statements, like "I feel stupid," "I hate math," or "I don't like to read," you should consider getting a tutor.

**Ask the teacher first.** Schedule an appointment to meet with your child's teacher to see if he or she has noticed any problems. In some cases, a new concept has been introduced and the whole class is working extra hard to understand it. However, if your child is having a tougher time grasping the concept, ask the teacher for recommendations on what needs to be done.

**Get specifics on what kind of help your child needs.** Is your child having difficulty in a particular subject, like reading or math? Is the stumbling block in learning a particular skill, like fractions? Only when you know exactly what the issues are can you know what kind of help to provide, and for how long.

**Begin with extra help at home.** You are your child's first and most important teacher. The best first step is to find out ways you can help your child, including activities you can do together at home. The way you approach this extra time is important. Be positive and helpful and give lots of praise when you see him or her trying hard and making improvements.

**Ask if there's help available at school.** Find out if your child's teacher has special sessions at lunch or after school for children who are falling a bit behind. Many times, a little one on one help from the teacher is all it takes to help your child get on track.

**Seek outside help.** Some children actually do better if they are tutored by an "outsider"—and that's where the growing network of tutors, both in-school and out, one-on-one or computerized, can be of great help. Get recommendations from the teacher or ask friends and neighbors if they know of either an individual or a local learning center that could help.

**Make it a game.** If you have a computer at home, ask the teacher if there are any educational computer games your child can practice on, like Reader rabbit or Math Blaster. Programs like these can make it more fun for children to work on drills and skills.

**Understand that some skill-building takes time.** Talk with the teacher and the tutor to find out what kind of progress your child should be making. Set some goals, both for the skills that will be learned and the time it should take to master them.

Finally, make sure to keep at it, even if your child doesn't seem to want the extra help. Schooling is like building a brick wall - - Every year builds on the knowledge gained the year before. If the foundation isn't solid, there will be problems later on.