

Visit With The Utays May 2004

School Psychology and Education Specialists

Reprinted from Northern Connections



Dr. Joe Utay, graduate of University of Pittsburgh, is a school psychologist, marriage and family therapist, author, national speaker, teacher, clinic director, and father. He earned tenure as a professor training counselors and school psychologists and is now Director of Counseling and Evaluation Services for TLC and part-time professor for Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Carol Utay, graduate of University of Pittsburgh, is an expert in curriculum, learning, special education, and technology. She has experience as a principal, teacher, consultant, national speaker, professor, author, and mother. "Dr. Carol" is Executive Director of Total Learning Centers. The Drs. Utay live and work in Wexford with their daughter Andrea.

How to Decide What Your Child Needs This Summer to Prepare for Fall 10 Questions to ask at the Parent-Teacher Conference

"I have a meeting set up with my child's teacher to talk about next year. Are there any special questions I should ask?"

We love to get questions from proactive parents. The teacher has worked intensively with your child for almost an entire school year and will have insights and information to help you plan for a successful next year. Use the following questions as a roadmap to guide you through this process. Your goal is to gather useful information about the past to use to make the best decisions for your child's future.

1. What are my child's academic strengths and weaknesses in academics and study skills?
2. What are my child's non-academic (social, emotional, athletic, artistic, etc.) strengths and weaknesses?
3. What weaknesses should be strengthened over the summer to prepare for success next year?
4. What area, though not a weakness now, without summer maintenance or strengthening, might be a problem next year?
5. What are your unconfirmed suspicions, confusions, observations of possible gaps in skills, or other "unknowns" that would benefit from an evaluation to figure out exactly what is going on?
6. Did my child score below the 50th percentile on standardized testing? (Note: Any child in

grades K-9th who score below the 50th percentile on reading, math, or language, qualifies for a \$500 grant for tutoring at an approved tutoring center, regardless of income.)

7. What teacher characteristics would be a most helpful fit for my child next year?
8. How are teachers chosen for students in the next grade? How can I offer input for the best type of teacher for my child?
9. What areas of strength or interest would my child benefit from enrichment experiences over the summer?
10. What do you consider your most valuable contribution to my child's development this year? (Follow the answer with, "Thank you!")

We suggest this order since the questions move from most potentially negative to positive. However, as always with published recommendations, individualize them to fit your child, your teacher, and your own personality and goals. Whichever questions you end up asking, speaking with your child's teacher now is an excellent way to prepare for success this fall.

Please ask! For more information and great websites to help with education challenges, visit the Total Learning Center website: www.TotalLearningCenter.com or call (724) 940-1090 for a free copy of a TLC CD full of useful information for parents.

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