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# Visit With The Utays

July 2005

*School Psychology and Education Specialists*

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**D**r. Joe Utay, a graduate of Pitt, has been a counselor, psychologist, family therapist, author, national speaker, teacher, clinic director and father. He earned tenure as a professor training school counselors, marriage and family therapists, and school psychologists; and is now Director of Counseling and Evaluation Services for Total Learning Centers. Dr. Carol Utay, also a graduate of Pitt, has experience as a Principal, teacher, computer trainer, national speaker, adjunct professor, author, and mother. With a doctorate in education, she has trained thousands of teachers and parents to help children achieve success and feel good about themselves. She is Executive Director of Total Learning Centers. Joe and Carol live and work in Wexford with their daughter Andrea.

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## Ways to Improve Reading Skills

You still have time this summer to prepare for success this fall.

***My children want nothing to do with reading this summer. They really appreciate the time off of school but I'm not sure that's wise. Any advice?***

You are wise to question that common thinking by fun-loving but short-sighted kids. Studies show that students who stop reading from June to August experience a loss of reading skills when returning to school. Children who do read through the summer not only don't lose ground but actually start back in September with better reading skills. Make time the rest of the summer to help your children sustain reading skills, practice to improve reading, and read for enjoyment.

Taking the time to read with your child can help you evaluate your child's reading skills. Spotting and filling in even small gaps in skills now can prevent major difficulties with reading later. The National Institutes of Health showed that 67 percent of young students at risk for reading difficulties became average or above average readers after receiving help in early grades. In other words, if your child is behind in reading, there is effective help available.

**Reading builds visualization, thinking, and language abilities.** The following are free or inexpensive ways to help your child continue developing reading skills throughout the rest of the summer:

- **Read aloud together with your child indoors or outdoors every day.**
- **Read the same book your child is reading and discuss it with them.** This develops good habits. It can also bring you closer as a family.
- **Let kids choose what they want to read.** Reading a magazine or comics is still practicing reading skills.
- **Buy books on tape, especially for a child with a learning disability.** Listen to a book in the car or as

a family activity. Many children focus better if they draw what is happening in the book as they listen.

- **Subscribe to magazines like Sports Illustrated for Kids, Highlights for Children, or National Geographic World.** Kids loves getting their own mail. Encourage older children to read the newspaper and current events magazines. Ask them what they think about what they've read, and listen to what they say.
- **"Classroom Plus" Grant.** Pennsylvania offers a free \$500 tutoring grant for kindergarten through 9<sup>th</sup> grade students who score below the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile in reading or math. Call an approved Classroom Plus Provider such as Total Learning Centers to find out how easy it is to get.

So, your children don't have to give up summer fun in order to include reading practice. Sustaining, improving, and enjoying summer reading is one more way to help your children prepare today for success tomorrow.

**Read more ideas for children at [www.TotalLearningCenter.com](http://www.TotalLearningCenter.com) or call (724) 940-1090 for a free copy of the TLC report: *How to Make the Best Use of Your Child's Summer.***

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