

Visit With the Utays

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School Psychology and Education Specialists



Dr. **Joe Utay**, Director of Counseling and Evaluation Services for Total Learning Centers and former professor for Indiana University of Pennsylvania's Department of Counseling, is a graduate of University of Pittsburgh, a school psychologist, marriage and family therapist, author, national speaker, and father. **Dr. Carol Utay** is Executive Director of Total Learning Centers. She is also a graduate of University of Pittsburgh, an expert in learning and special education. "Dr. Carol" has experience as a principal, Orton-Gillingham reading therapist, teacher, consultant, national speaker, professor, author, and mother. She is a national 2006 Athena Award winner for community service. They live and work in the North Hills with their daughter Andrea.

Improve Reading with Local Resources

"Though he struggles some, I'm not sure my child really needs extra help developing reading skills. If there was an obvious problem of course I'd get him help, but is it worth the time and money otherwise? If so, I know what my school offers but what else is available in the community as a resource?"
Concerned Parent

When in doubt, find out. Reading is not come automatic for many children. As you would with any part of development, when your child is not learning to listen, speak, move, or read as expected do not "wait and see" – get help to find out what exactly is happening. For example, letter reversals (reading or writing letters backwards even after repeated practice) should be outgrown by age seven. Research says we can effectively teach 95% of children to read at their grade level even with possible learning problems, attention weaknesses, dyslexia, language learning disabilities, etc. The key is to get the right help before they fall too far behind. For many children, that means using powerful non-traditional teaching methods. So, to answer your first question, start with getting a good evaluation that includes specific and practical next-step recommendations.

Pittsburgh has many great resources. Space limits us from sharing a more comprehensive list, and you mentioned already knowing what your school offers, but feel free to call us for help with any aspect of this often confusing journey. To start, these great local resources are certainly worth considering.

Pittsburgh Association for the Education of Young Children (PAEYC) www.pghaeyc.org

Beginning with Books www.beginningwithbooks.org

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh www.carnegielibrary.org

The International Dyslexia Association, Pittsburgh Chapter (email info@pghida.org)

READ 365! (suggests reading to your child 20 minutes a day) www.read365.org

Family Communications www.misterrogers.org

Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council (adult literacy) www.gplc.org

University of Pittsburgh's LEADERS (Literacy Educators Assessing and Developing Early Reading Success) Program (ideas for teachers) www.education.pitt.edu/leaders/teach.aspx

Munchkin's Bookshelf in Wexford munchinsbookshelf.com

Borders Bookstore on McKnight Road www.visitborders.com

Barnes and Noble Bookstore in Cranberry www.bn.com

Total Learning Centers in Wexford, Fox Chapel, and Murrysville. (Our own resource for testing, recommendations, tutoring, and other services) www.TotalLearningCenter.com

As parents, relatives, community leaders, concerned citizens, volunteers, educators, and other professionals, we all need to make sure we are each doing what we can to maximize children's love of and skill in reading. You clearly are willing to do your part. Together we will help them, and therefore our community, prepare today for success tomorrow.

For more information about this or any other topic related to your child's success, including professional assessment of strengths and needs, or a free TLC report: How to Make the Best Use of Your Child's Summer, contact Total Learning Centers at 724-940-1090 (Wexford, Fox Chapel, and Murrysville areas).

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