

Visit With the Utays

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School Psychology and Education Specialists



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Preparing for a Parent-Teacher Conference 10 Vital Questions to Ask Now

"I always get home after meeting with my child's teacher and realize all the questions I didn't think to ask at the time. What should I ask? I'm especially concerned about homework and want to nip any problems in the bud right now."

Parents and teachers head to the parent-teacher conference with the same general goal: to determine the best ways to help the student get the most out of their learning experience. Teachers are the main source of formal education for your child. While tutors and learning centers can supplement and add powerful support to the teacher's curriculum, you are in the best position to coordinate or tie together the threads that make up the fabric of your child's world of education. So, you are quite wise to 1) meet with the teacher, 2) meet now, and 3) come ready to ask these team-building problem-preventing questions.

1. "What is the most difficult area for my child so far this year?" *Listen carefully. If the answer is reading, that could be the reason for current or future homework problems. Reading fluency (skill AND speed) is needed for all subject areas.*
2. "What problems might cause my child to struggle with homework this year?" *Carefully take notes, prioritize, and commit to use all your resources to work on those areas.*
3. "What special help can the school offer my child to get back on track with homework as quickly as possible?" *If help by the school doesn't totally fit your needs, that's when a resource like Total Learning Centers can be most valuable.*
4. "How do you check that homework is completed to your expectations? My child says it's finished or there isn't any. How do I make sure what I'm hearing is what you want?"
5. "Would you give me a head's up if homework is not completed or turned in?"
6. "How often do you give homework?"
7. "How much time is expected to spend on homework?"

8. "What happens if students do not understand the homework?"
9. "What type of homework involvement do you expect from parents?"
10. "When and how are you available to answer questions about homework?" *Teachers often find email most convenient.*

The above questions are focused on homework but can be easily adapted to any issue you want to address such as concerns with learning a foreign language or social issues. To best gauge your child's performance in any area, you need a solid understanding of 1) your teacher's expectations and 2) your child's ability to do what is expected. If you need more information about your child's current skills, have him or her professionally evaluated. Finally, include your child's perspective when talking with the teacher. Collaborating with your teacher now is one more way to help your child prepare today for success tomorrow.

To discuss your own child's unique needs, contact Total Learning Centers at 724.940.1090 or check their website at www.TotalLearningCenters.com. (Wexford, Fox Chapel, and Murrysville areas).

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