

Visit With the Utays

January 2009

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 and 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 Athena Award winner for community service.

Your Child Needs Better Attention

Dear Drs. Utay: "I truly believe my son can do much better in school if only he'd focus his attention better. We've tried motivating him by reinforcing good attention and punishing poor attention. Gains are short-lived. Now we're thinking maybe it's not worth the investment of time and energy to push him to improve his attention which is, well, good enough." Sincerely, Considering Giving Up in North Hills

Dear Considering Giving Up in North Hills: Do not give up! Your son does need to strengthen his ability to control the focus of his attention. How do we know that without ever meeting your son? Because ALL students need to optimize this crucial skill to fully apply their intelligence to learning. As with any skill, no matter how good you are, there is always room for improvement. You may draw the good-enough line for yourself when it comes to cooking or skiing. However, we have never met a student for whom improved attention would not lead to improved achievement.

Signs your child needs better attention:

1. Getting ready in the morning is **maddening** which gets everyone's day off to a negative beginning.
2. Inconsistent attention is paid to the teacher which is **frustrating** later when realizing important chunks of information are missing.
3. Doing routine homework is **exasperating** since paying attention is a prerequisite to knowing what to do, organizing time and resources, and finishing in a reasonable timeframe.
4. Studying for and taking quizzes and tests are **overwhelming**.
5. Planning for and completing projects is **impossible** without major support from parents, which is **embarrassing** and **pressures** the parent-child relationship.

Add to this list the effects of less-than-optimum attention on social success and satisfaction, athletic achievement, and early work experiences, and you still have an incomplete picture of the importance of making attention as strong as possible. All students - not just those with Attention Deficit Disorder - need to **push their attention ability to its limits**.

Especially considering the very high expectations of today's schools, settling for "good enough" attention, as you put it, is definitely not fair to your child. Clearly, you are on the lookout of how to best help your child learn. So, give him the available opportunities to develop his attention and therefore maximize his ability to **SUCCESSFULLY** apply all of his attributes in and out of the classroom. Maximizing attention skills is one more way to help him prepare today for success tomorrow.

Call Total Learning Centers to discuss brain-based programs that improve attention. Also, Dr. Carol Utay will hold a free informational update on how to keep the brain healthy (yours, your children's, parent's, and grandparent's) on Thursday January 15th, 2009 at 7:00 pm. Please RSVP at success@totallearningcenter.com or leave a message 24 hours a day on Dr. Carol's voice mail at 724-940-1084. Bring a friend. Everyone who attends receives a certificate for discounted services for using Cogmed as distance learning to drastically improve memory at any age.

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