

Visit With the Utays

February 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.

Parent to Parent

Sometimes the best person to listen to for advice on parenting is a fellow parent- someone who has "walked the walk" and can shed some light on the often unlit parenting path. Of course, education experts are also useful resources to parents. Their specialized training and experience offer unique perspectives and know-how that enrich our lives and those of our children. But there's nothing like hearing how a fellow parent avoided an educational mine field or learned a valuable lesson that you can now benefit from with your own child. So, this month we asked a parent and her son to briefly share with you their story, in hopes that you may be inspired to take whatever action is needed to help your child, as we say, prepare today for success tomorrow.

Dr. Carol Utay (Dr. C): Mary, how is John doing in school?

Mary: Well now he's doing great – see his big grin – making good grades; he's improved a lot and is much less stressed. I'm so proud of him.

Dr. C: That's great. So John, what's the secret of your success?

John: I got a lot of help and worked hard.

Dr. C: You mean you weren't working hard before?

John: Well, I did for a while but when you try and try and never do as good as you're supposed to do, it's easy to give up. I mean, it's kind of dumb NOT to give up, or at least not try AS hard. What's the use?

Dr. C: Yes, it's hard to be motivated to do what SEEMS impossible. So, what changed?

Mary: When we did everything we knew to do and his report card didn't show any signs of improvement, we had him tested – which was not as big a deal as we assumed it would be. Anyway, the evaluation uncovered the real problems underneath the surface.

Dr. C: You make it sound easy.

Mary: My advice to other parents is not to be overwhelmed by your FANTASY of what it'll take to help your child. Once we understood what the real problems were, it was just a matter of fixing the cracks in the foundation of his learning and John did the rest naturally.

Dr. C: John, are you glad your parents got you the help you needed?

John: At first I hated it. I thought the tests would show I was stupid and then I'd have to go to tutoring during my free time after school. I was embarrassed and mad. But it didn't take long for me see how helpful it was. And, it turns out I'm NOT stupid!

To discuss your child's individual needs, please contact your nearby Total Learning Center at (724) 940-1090, email success@totallearningcenters.com, or check the website at www.TotalLearningCenters.com.

Total Learning Centers was voted Best Tutoring and Best College Prep by Nickelodeon's Parent Picks.

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