

Visit With the Utays

February 2011

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 recognized national Athena Award winner for community service.



From Balancing on Ice to a Balanced Summer

Dear Drs. Utay,

"My daughter really looks forward to a fun-filled summer camp experience. She enjoys the arts and crafts and playing with other kids. However, now that she's a bit older, with more school learning to slip from her brain over the summer, I wonder if a whole summer without school is too long. – Joan, Wexford

With snow and ice all around us, it is hard to think about summer. But, many summer camps want commitments by March and the last thing you want is to decide two days after their deadline that you do want her to attend. Also, your question is not as simple as camp or no camp, so you are wise to **start the decision making process now**.

Summer camp should be a wonderful memorable experience, offering children an opportunity to expand horizons and gain valuable experiences. But, planning is essential. Summer plans for our daughter changed according to her needs and interests at the time, and our own, including everything from 4H, cheerleading, and soccer camps, to academic and more spiritually-based camp experiences. We learned that **the key is to balance** fun social activities with academic, physical, and other skill-based (sports, music, dance, art, etc.) activities.

The following are some considerations to think about and discuss when making this decision:

- How might camp **satisfy a need** not addressed during the school year?
- What are the pros and cons, for your specific child, of a **general or special interest camp**?
- Consider **timing**: 1, 2, 3, or more weeks? An overnight or day camp? (The American Camping Association is a national organization that provides accreditation to camps that meet their

standards.) Consider your specific child's strengths and needs.

- What about **adult needs** like cost, transportation, and your availability when your child is not at camp?
- For many students, three months is simply too long of an academic break. What **school skills need strengthening** before, during or after camp?

TLC offers several summer camps designed to help children improve a variety of academic skills. Reading, math, and handwriting are popular summer programs that encourage children to **learn in a fun environment** while interacting with other kids their age. Some parents will be interested in our Sensory Integration Camp. Easily distracted, inattentive, overly sensitive, and overactive children are among those helped to **"get it together" using sensory integration strategies**.

While "just" lounging around the house, watching TV, or playing computer games can potentially be valuable activities, as children are quick to point out, start your search now for a **more balanced summer**. If considering social, speech and language, sensory integration, or academic learning as part of your child's balanced summer plan, give us a call (724) 940-1090 or check out the website, www.totallearningcenter.com – we would love to talk to you more. If easier, email us at success@TotalLearningCenter.com. Follow Dr. Carol Utay on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/carolutay>.

Honored by Parent Advocates for Learning Support for
“**outstanding dedication, passion, and commitment in
meeting the learning needs of all children.**”

**Total Learning Centers was voted two years running for
Best Tutoring and Best SAT Prep by Nickelodeon’s Parent
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