

# Visit With the Utays

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*School Psychology and Education Specialists*

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## 3 Ways to Significantly Help Children with Attention Issues

*Dear Drs. Utay,*

*My son was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. At first, he was able to get by with help after school. Now it is more difficult for him to keep up with his class. We've had some suggestions from teachers but I also want advice from professionals who specialize in helping high potential students with ADHD.*

We often hear about students with ADHD doing well in the early grades. Then, as the work becomes more difficult, they fall behind as **more focus is required for the same level of success**. Research shows three powerful techniques help students significantly improve their focus. Each is valuable individually, but the **best results are seen when the three are combined**.

First, consider your child's nutrition, sleep schedule, exercise, and medications. These are linked in that **each help regulate the energy of the body**. You already know it is a good idea for any child to have a regular eating and sleep schedule, but for students with ADHD, they are essential. Many parents also choose to use medication to help their child control their focus.

Nutrition is very connected to attention. When our bodies do not have proper nutrition we are susceptible to inattention, drowsiness, and even a negative attitude. Check with your son's health provider, but most will recommend to avoid foods high in sugar and artificial dyes and increase foods high in protein and omega 3 fatty acids. Again, **what you already know is useful for kids in general are especially vital for kids with overly varied attention**.

Second, **develop attention as a set of specific skills through direct training**. At Total Learning Centers (TLC), we use a program that strengthens the major types of attention including sustained, selective, alternating, and divided. Through direct remediation we are able to teach students the tools they will need for their classroom education, social interactions, and other "real life" situations. For example, remembering test instructions and what book to bring home become second nature after the program.

The third recommendation is borrowed from a specific cognitive behavioral counseling technique called mindfulness. In this program, students are taught to become aware of distractions then practice methods to avoid them and when needed, gently bring attention back. Very popular among students and parents, mindfulness is one of our most successful programs at TLC. For years we have seen great success with **attention focusing and re-focusing**.

Developing consistent healthy habits, directly training the skill of attention, and practicing quickly noticing and reacting appropriately when attention is not where it needs to be, in addition to teacher and school support, make a powerful combination in helping your child prepare today for success tomorrow. For more information about any of these approaches, and to discuss the specific needs of your child, please call TLC at (724) 940-1090 or check out the website, [www.totallearningcenter.com](http://www.totallearningcenter.com) – we would love to talk to you more. If easier, email us at [success@TotalLearningCenter.com](mailto: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 Picks.**

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