

Visit With the Utays

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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, 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 2006 Athena Award winner for community service. They live and work in the North Hills with their daughter Andrea.

“Why are my Child’s Grades Dropping?”

Let the Hunt Begin!

“Our son is not a great student but did fairly well the first half of the year. This year, instead of just pushing him to try harder, we want to figure out why my child’s grades are dropping. Maybe then we can really fix the problem.”

When you write “we,” as in, “we can really fix the problem,” hopefully you are including your son. He is a valuable part of the solution-hunting team. Most likely your child is as disappointed as you at losing a battle involving grades. Parents we work with have found to be most helpful a combination of empathy and an intellectual pursuit (or in child language, a treasure hunt) for the causes in order to best prepare for the next battle.

Start with your child’s teacher. What percentage of the final grade is based on tests, quizzes, homework, class work, projects, etc.? Some teachers also award points for attendance, attitude, participation, or having materials ready. Next, examine your child’s specific scores to determine where the most points were lost. For example, if homework was the battle front with the most casualties, find out why. Was it turned in late or never completed? Also, don’t assume the final grade is based mainly on test grades; tests could be 25% of the grade, or less.

Next, check study skills. Often a child looks unmotivated or unskilled, when really it’s poor study skills at fault. How to do find out? Ask your child the following. However, remain in teamwork treasure-hunt mode. No preaching. Also, react to ignorance as if, “I don’t know,” is the next clue to follow to the treasure — it is.

- How do you organize and keep track of your assignments?
- How do you take notes?
- How do you get ready to study?
- How do you study for different types of tests?
- How much is each assignment, quiz, test, project, etc. worth?
- When do you start preparing for an assignment due in one, two or three weeks?
- How do you celebrate finishing homework, completing a project, or making a good grade?
- Who do you ask for help? When? How?

Believe it or not, if grades do not improve immediately with a better understanding of teacher expectations and changing basic study habits, the solution hunt gets easier, not harder. Have your child evaluated to easily find out if improvement is needed with reading, math, attention, memory, thinking speed, or other skills. A professional one-on-one educational evaluation using nationally standardized tests is like a powerful metal detector zeroing in on exactly what skills (if any) need dug up and repaired.

For more information about the evaluation process or to discuss in more depth your child’s unique strengths and needs, contact Total Learning Centers at 724.940.1090 or info@totallearningcenters.com.
