

Visit With the Utays

March 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: Is Summer School Worth it?

Each summer kids are quite satisfied doing anything that does not remind them of school. This month we asked a mother and her son if investing the time, money, and energy into taking classes last summer paid off when he returned to school in the fall.

Dr. Carol Utay (Dr. U): Claire, how is Chris doing in school this year?

Claire: Great now, but it wasn't easy getting here. Chris is a good kid and he really did try last year. He would forget homework and when he did do it, it took a long time to complete. We were always fighting about homework so we were both really worried about this year.

Dr. U: So Chris, for some strange reason you weren't into the idea of developing your school skills during the summer?

Chris: School was not a happy place for me last year. It's bad enough that I had to suffer through it all year long during the regular school year so why would I want to do more schoolwork during the summer?

Dr. U: So what did you end up deciding about summer learning?

Chris: Well my parents bribed me to go to Total Learning Centers. At first I was very against it.

Dr. U: But your mom motivated you to do it anyway?

Chris: Yeah it was important to my parents and I was hopeful that this actually would help and the bribe didn't hurt either. I was really surprised when it wasn't just worksheets and boring stuff. It kept my attention and I really liked the teachers.

Dr. U: So once you got started in the program you found it wasn't as bad as you expected?

Chris: It wasn't horrible and really it was interesting and fun but I didn't really know it until the fall that it was actually helpful to me.

Dr. U.: So Chris do you want to then return to Total Learning Centers and invest some of this coming summer time to best prepare to make next year easier?

Chris: My mom asked me the same question. Even though I know it would be very helpful and it would for sure make next year easier, I'm still negotiating for what I might earn for it!

Dr. U: So Claire what final advice do you give to parents who are deciding whether to enroll their child in a summer learning experience?

Claire: Don't wait. Have hope. Take a chance. Your child's future is worth it. Your relationship with your child will improve. The worst part can be getting your kid to actually agree to do it but I've also learned from experience that I am the parent. I am the one in charge of my child's development and I need to take a stronger leadership role as a parent in making the decision that is in my child's best interest -- to devote some of his summer to developing the skills he needs to be most successful in the fall and beyond.

To discuss your child's individual summer or current needs, please contact Total Learning Centers 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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