

Visit With the Utays

May 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.



Children's Memory: Friends and Foes

*Dear Drs. Carol and Joe Utay,
I can understand my memory becoming less reliable, but not my son's. I have to re-teach what his math teacher teaches him. He is constantly forgetting what books he needs. I know he is smart, but I am noticing his poor memory affecting his grades. Any ideas how to help him?*

Your son is not alone. There are many smart students whose memory is not strong enough to accomplish what is required. When we were growing up, beyond taking notes, students used creativity to boost their memory. We used tricks like associating the first letter of Every Good Boy Deserves Fudge with the musical notes or ROYGBIV for the colors of the rainbow. While still useful, **we now have ways to increase the ability of the brain itself to remember.**

Research suggests three factors that impact memory:

1. **Health** – Making time for exercise can have amazing benefits. However, without the right amount of sleep each night exercise is not enough. Also, many nutritionists suggest including protein with breakfast. Specifics can be controversial, but **everyone agrees that exercise, nutrition, and sleep are REQUIRED for optimal memory.**
2. **Stress** – A minimum amount of stress is needed for focusing and performing well. When stress crosses the line however, glucocorticoids are released and interfere with memory. Taking a few minutes to walk, stretch, drink water, or just count your next three complete breaths, can make a huge difference. If stress remains an issue, consider a program we use at TLC called Mindfulness. (See totallearningcenter.com and search Mindfulness.) Mindfulness training helps participants **quickly refocus their attention when distracted by their environment or worries.**

3. **Memory Training** – Similar to working out to develop a muscle, the brain must be challenged to stay fit. Total Learning Centers have two programs that work specifically on **directly developing the brain's memory muscle.** Cogmed is a computer based program entirely dedicated to working memory training completed independently at home. (See totallearningcenter.com and search Cogmed.) Cognitive Educational Therapy (CET) is a more wide-ranging mind sharpening program that focuses on areas of the brain's executive functioning, including memory and attention improvement. (See totallearningcenter.com and search CET.)

Sudden memory loss or weakness could be a symptom of a medical or emotional issue so consider consulting with an appropriate professional. Otherwise, if you have tried implementing our tips on managing health and stress and still feel like your son is struggling with his memory, consider visiting TLC for a **free no obligation consultation** with one of our education experts. **We would love to help you.**

For more information on your specific child's memory issues or you own for that matter, please call TLC at (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 Picks.

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