

FINDING THE RIGHT TUTOR

Most types of learners--whether overachieving or underachieving, auditory or visual, motivated or unmotivated--can benefit from working with a tutor. While the success of a tutoring venture depends greatly on what the learner brings to the table, the match between tutor and student is equally important. How can one locate the right tutor for a particular student?



Consider several questions as you begin the search for a tutor.

- Has the tutor been recommended by a credible source such as a teacher, counselor, another parent, or a professional familiar with your child? These sources are good places to start looking for suggestions.
- What are the tutor's qualifications? Is the tutor a generalist or specialist? How long has the individual been tutoring? Ask to review the person's resume and ask for references that you can contact.
- What instructional methods will be used in the tutoring process? Is any kind of assessment procedure used to determine tutoring strategy? Is your child likely to respond well to these teaching methods? For example, will the tutoring sessions be highly structured or highly flexible?
- Is there a "good fit" between your child and the tutor? Will your child be comfortable with the tutor? Are you comfortable with the tutor? Is the tutor comfortable with your child and your family? Trust your intuition.
- Where will the tutoring sessions occur--in the family home, in another private facility, in a public facility? Is the atmosphere conducive to your child's success? With the popularity of the Internet, online tutoring services are available these days. One may be appropriate for your child, but investigate carefully, applying all of the quality and methodology questions posed here.
- How does the tutor deal with challenging issues such as a resistant child, an unmotivated child or a shy child?
- How will the tutor be accountable? How is success tracked? How regularly can you expect progress reports?
- What are the payment policies? Are you expected to pay for missed sessions? Is group tutoring available; would it be more manageable for the family budget and still effective for the student?
- Will you be expected to sign a contract for service? Read it carefully several times to determine if you have any issues with the terms. Find out under what circumstances the contract can be broken.

A good tutoring experience can be a wonderful educational asset for your child whether s/he is struggling or thriving in school. View promises of a "quick fix" with healthy skepticism. Be sure to set realistic expectations for the process with your child. If the tutoring arrangement you set up is not working well, it may not be anyone's fault. You can try re-negotiating the terms or begin the search for another service.