



## TUTORING TIPS

"Together we'll make a better tomorrow . "

Tutoring is essentially an individual experience - the interrelationships of two individuals working closely together. In this relationship there is no one method, no easy answer. The most success will be found with methods which you develop yourself while working with the student. Any method which helps your child will be considered the best method. Tutoring tips presented here summarize suggestions which I have found helpful. They are intended to serve as a guide to you in your work. They will be valuable only to the extent to which you use them.

### PURPOSES OF TUTORING

1. To improve the educational achievement of the student.
2. To better the student's picture of himself and to increase his life experience
3. To widen the horizons of the student through contact with a concerned, helpful, more experienced person.

REMEMBER: Tutoring is not teaching. Tutoring simply provides the assistance and support which as a concerned parent can and often does provide. Experienced educators agree that those not trained for teaching can change a student's picture of himself and his attitude through effective tutoring.

### COMMITMENT

Tutoring demands a definite commitment. Do not start unless you can be faithful throughout the program. Few things will kill a child's faith in his tutor and the program quicker than having a tutor who fails to appear at a scheduled lesson.

## GENERAL TIPS

1. Relax and be yourself
2. PERSONAL CONCERN FOR YOUR CHILD IS YOUR GREATEST ASSET AS A TUTOR. Past experience has shown that effective tutoring is based more on rapport between a tutor and child than upon the tutor's expertise on a subject area. Tutors should work to build a relationship of mutual confidence with their student. Keep in mind what you do is as much a language as what you say.

## TIPS FOR THE FIRST SESSION

1. Be sure that you and your student have names straight. Learn nicknames if any. It will help to write down your name and give it to the young person. Students often are hesitant to communicate with tutors when they are uncertain of names. Moreover, you should exchange telephone numbers for emergency communications.
2. To build rapport, talk with the child about mutual interests and above all listen.
3. Break your tutoring sessions into several short segments of various activities. For example, at the elementary level, you might allow 15 minutes for oral reading, five minutes for a game or other fun activity, 20 minutes for arithmetic drill, 15 minutes for story writing. Your student will get less restless if he knows in advance when the session will end.
4. To the extent possible, be creative and imaginative in your tutoring methods. Look for ways to motivate your student and him in the activity.
5. Many of your questions about the child's difficulties and solutions may be answered by a visit with his teacher. Teachers are grateful for the work you are doing and they can be most helpful.

6. Be sensitive to the existence of emotional or psychological problems that may be affecting the performance of the person. However, it is not the tutor's role to handle these problems. Bring them to the attention of the teacher or principal.

7. AVOID ASSUMING THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TEACHER AND THE PARENTS! Your job is to help these people, not replace them.

8. Resist the temptation to criticize the schools as a means of identifying with the child. School is an important avenue of opportunity and betterment in our society. The tutor should attempt to improve the child's attitude toward teachers and schools. This approach will allow the benefits of tutoring to carry over to the school. If the tutor has questions regarding the school's instructional program, its policies and procedures, it is strongly recommended that he contact the principal.

9. Always be on time. This adds to the effectiveness of your tutoring. If you are late the child may begin to doubt the sincerity of your concern for tutoring.

#### TIPS FOR TUTORING READING

1. If the young person has a limited background and trouble communicating, talk to him, show him new things, listen to him, let him listen to new sounds, extend his visual awareness of color, shape and texture. Wider experience means more reading readiness.

2. Use a reader different from the one your child uses in school. There are many high interest books available in the reading lab and in the library.

3. For free reading, select a book below your student's ability level. Let him choose something he is interested in.

4. Read more difficult stories to your child. This allows him to hear new words and experience good literature.

5. Don't ask a student questions on something he has read out loud. Ask questions for comprehension after silent reading.
6. Encourage the child to make up stories and tell them to you. Write the story down just as he told it and let him read it back to you. Type it if your writing is illegible. If your student needs encouragement to tell a story, ask leading questions or begin a story and let him complete it.
7. Matching words and pictures can be used for a young child and bilingual students.

#### TIPS FOR TUTORING ARITHMETIC

1. Use games to encourage drill.
2. Keeping charts of the child's individual progress may help keep interest.
3. Involve the child in his work by providing sticks or buttons to work with in solving problems.
4. Try to devise practical problems for the student to solve. For example, what is the shortest route from school to home?

#### CAUTION

Tutoring is a way of trying to help other people. It is not difficult in trying to help others, to do more harm than good. People who often help in a patronizing or condescending way easily can compound the very feelings of inadequacy they are trying to help the other person to overcome.

To reduce this danger, there are several ways of helping young people that have proven valuable in other tutoring projects.

1. One way to avoid a patronizing tone is to relate to your child as an equal. Do this in the sense that you and he are human beings with problems and a future to face. Think of working with your child rather than talking at him. Many tutors like to think of being a friend, and the essence of friendship is the practice of trustfulness.

2. Avoid thinking of yourself, and talking to others, as the giver and helper, or in the extreme, as the savior from the outside with the answer to all the problems of the educationally or environmentally disadvantaged.

3. Most young people will be able to tell you their problem subjects. Once you know this, seek the cause of their problems. Some ways of doing this at the elementary level are:

Reading: Have the child read aloud from a book below his grade level. If he misses only one or two words and can tell you what he has read, go on to a more difficult book. By having the student read aloud you can quickly detect common problems, such as guessing words from their first letter.

Math: Ask the child to show you his book and have him do some problems in the current or previous lessons. If a book is not available, ask him what work the class is doing. Then together, make up similar problems.

4. Begin tutoring at a level well within the grasp of the child. This will provide an atmosphere of success. Remember, many children have had little success in school and need a rewarding experience to restore their self assurance. This atmosphere will build the child's confidence, and will help establish a good working relationship between tutor and child. Two corollaries to this are:

A. It is not advisable to let your child flounder on an answer for more than a few moments, especially in reading. Step in, tactfully, and help out.

B. Indicate immediately whether the student's answers are right or wrong. Let him know that you are pleased by a right answer. When he is wrong, do not show your disapproval to the point where your student becomes discouraged.

## TIPS FOR LATER SESSIONS

1. In general, the less work you do for your student, the better. Although it is quicker, easier, and less frustrating for a tutor to do a prior lesson or an assignment, it is of little permanent help to the child. Help him learn to how to do his own work. A good tutor will spend most of the time asking questions, listening, and helping the child to think for himself, rather than lecturing the child. When you supply an answer, be sure your child understands how you arrived at it. If you are not sure that he does, test your student with a similar example. In this manner your child should be able to handle what you are helping him with when he is in class.

2. Move on to more challenging materials soon as you have established a working relationship. Once you feel the tutoring is going well, don't be guilty of under expectation. If you expect little from your student, he will produce little. Let him know you have high expectations for him. With this encouragement he may come to have the same high expectations for himself.

3. Don't expect your child to show appreciation for your efforts before you have become a friend. One tutor destroyed whatever relationship he had developed with his child by repeating on two occasions, "Here I am, traveling 10 miles twice a week to help you out of your difficulties and you haven't even finished your homework for me."

4. Empathy is an important quality to seek if you are tutoring. Have enough understanding of your child and knowledge of his background and possible cultural differences so that you accept him as he is, rather than reject him because he is not what you think he ought to be. Be willing to start at his level and take his place if you want to make progress.

5. Be sensitive in communicating with your child. More than anything, this means being a careful listener.

6. Don't be quick to judge. Many of the students who are children have lived a life of finding themselves and being judged according to stereotypes of character, ability and intelligence. Avoid perpetuating this pattern.

7. Many of the characteristics which make your child different from you are what make him an individual. Viewed this way, his differences often appear as strengths.

8. Set the same standards of effort for your child as you would set for other students his age. Do not adopt the attitude, "Well, he did as well as could be expected." Avoid lowering standards out of a failure and a feeling that they are unattainable. Do not allow your child to just "get by."

YOU are about to begin a commitment which can be rewarding with a high degree of accomplishment. Whatever you give to the young will be worthwhile. With dedication, your contribution in time may be an immense one. Approach this commitment with seriousness of purpose and intelligence. You will get from tutoring only what you give to it.

"Education is Never as Expensive as Ignorance"