

Choosing A Tutor For Your Child

The first and most important question to ask yourself is why you feel your child needs a tutor. The answer to this question will guide you to who and what you are looking for. Children may need a tutor for a number of reasons:

- Your child has fallen behind either generally or on a particular subject. This may be for a number of reasons – being off school sick could be one.
- Your child may lack confidence or need a little more encouragement – maybe they have moved to a new class, school or area.
- Your child might be coming up to an important exam.

The important thing is to be honest with yourself about your child's strengths and weaknesses and what he/she will gain from the experience.

What does your child think?

Speak to your child and know exactly how they are getting on at school. They will be able to tell you if they are having difficulties either generally, or in relation to a particular subject. Children don't want to struggle and are keen to have problems sorted. Talk to them and ask them if they would like some extra help and explain what difference you feel the tutor will make. Being open and honest with your child is the best policy. This will encourage them to be the same way with you. It is not a good idea to force your child to have tutoring if they don't want it. Children can feel pressurised by having to learn or perform under duress. It is therefore of the utmost importance that your child is part of all the decisions.

Should you inform your child's teacher/school?

The school should be kept informed about your plans and final decision. In fact, it would be advisable to talk to them first to discuss your reasons why you feel the need to have a tutor for your child. They may be able to give you some guidance and information about your

child that you may not be aware of and that could be shared with the tutor, or have an impact on your decision. Take on board what the school has to say about why they would think a tutor would or would not be helpful. Perhaps they may offer extra help that would mean a tutor may not be necessary. This would also save you the expense of having to pay for the tutor. The school may also know of someone who would be suitable for your child. A tutor may teach in a different way or use different methods to the school so finding one who knows how your child is being taught can be very beneficial.

How do I know my child will be safe?

The tutor will be alone with your child so it is essential for your child's safety and your peace of mind that you take time to check them out thoroughly. Other things for consideration are:

- Will the tutor come to your home? This is one of the best ways to keep your child safe. You can decide what part of the house they will use and you can keep an eye on things. If anything should happen that makes the child feel uncomfortable they know you are nearby.
- Will you have to go to the tutor's premises? If so, can you stay and wait if you have travelled? Or is there somewhere nearby that you can shop or have a coffee? If you can't stay you should ask about any other people who are on the premises apart from the tutor and your child.
- Ask the tutor if you can speak to other families who have used their services.
- Ask for written references
- Find out as much as you can about where they have been working and his/her experience in the subject that you want them to tutor your child in.
- Have another adult with you when you first meet the tutor to give their view of him/her.
- At some point during the meeting the child should meet the tutor.
- After the meeting everyone can share their opinion.
- Tutors who are employed as teachers should have been background checked by the school. Even so, you can still carry out your own checks.

Other things to consider

You should be sure that the tutor has the right experience and knowledge for your child's needs. Teachers can cover a wide range of subjects and age groups. Tutoring will only work if the tutor's experience and knowledge match your child's needs. Ask to see their background experience and qualifications.

Agree in advance with the tutor and the child what work will be covered in each session and also agreed how you will be kept informed of progress or difficulties.

After each session talk with the child about how they felt about the work they had covered and about 'how they got on' with the tutor. This will give you an indication about how he/she felt in the tutor's company. Watch out for any signs in the child's behaviour or demeanour which would indicate that the child is unhappy about any aspect of the experience.

Finally

- Be clear with the tutor and child that if things don't work out that the tutoring can be stopped at any time.
- If you have any doubts about a tutor don't use them. Keeping your child safe is the most important thing and your child depends on you for that.
- Agree the rate in advance and method of payment

If you would like help with any other family issue, Please ring **Parents Advice Centre** for guidance and support on **Freephone 0808 8010 722** or email parents@pachelp.org