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(<http://www.greatschools.org/gk/category/smart-strategies/>) » Hiring a tutor? 10 questions you must ask

Hiring a tutor? 10 questions you must ask

Asking the right questions can make all the difference in choosing a tutor for your child.

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Tutoring has become a multibillion-dollar industry, offering struggling and successful students alike a wealth of educational resources. Deciding which tutor is the best fit for your family may seem overwhelming, but fret not! With a little forethought, you can easily narrow down your choices and make sure your child gets exactly what she needs.

Here are 10 questions to point you in the right direction:

- 1 Who will do the tutoring?**
When dealing with a tutoring company, you are trusting it to hire the right person for your child — so be sure you agree with the company's philosophy. Find out how much say you have in selecting a tutor and how

the company determines which one is appropriate for your child. If the tutor is ill or unavailable, will your child be assigned a substitute?

If you've chosen an online tutoring service, ask if the company employs instructors in other countries. You'll need to monitor whether the tutor and your child can overcome any language barriers without the benefit of face-to-face interaction. Be sure to ask how he plans to build a rapport with your child and become familiar with her textbooks and classroom assignments.

2

What are the tutor's qualifications?

Does he have experience teaching the subject your child needs help with? It's not necessary that an instructor be a credentialed teacher for your child's grade level: A good chemistry tutor for your high schooler might have experience teaching college-level chemistry, for example, even if he doesn't have a high school teaching credential. But he should at least have a college minor in the subject.

Does the prospective tutor have experience teaching children of similar ages and learning styles to your kid's? If your child has special needs, it is especially important that the tutor be properly trained.

3

What is the tutor's track record?

In addition to asking for references from teachers or other parents, request evidence of the tutor's success in raising student achievement, such as:

- Higher test results
- Improved classroom grades
- Better homework completion
- Satisfaction surveys of students or parents

Where will the sessions take place?

4 Whether your child is tutored at school, an office, a community center, or someone's home, you need to be comfortable with the location. If transportation is required, factor that into your decision. A number of studies have shown that regular, frequent tutoring is the most effective and that more sessions per week result in greater gains.

If you've chosen online tutoring, make sure your child has access to a computer, headset, or other necessary equipment.

5 **How many students will be tutored at a time?**

While some students thrive in small groups, others do better with one-on-one instruction. Be sure your choice can provide a setting that works for your child's particular learning style. If you've chosen group tutoring, find out what is the maximum number of students per class.

6 **How will the tutor measure your child's progress?**

Ask how the tutor will devise a study plan that's right for your child and assess whether goals are achieved. If the tutor provides written reports, request a sample so you can be sure they are clear and helpful.

7 **How often will the tutor communicate with you and your child's teacher?**

The tutor and teacher should be working toward a common goal. Ideally, they would communicate regularly and reinforce each other's techniques. Be sure to let the teacher know about your child's tutoring, and ask if he can give feedback on your child's progress in the classroom. You will also need to establish a regular time when your child is not present to discuss her progress with the tutor.

8

What is the policy for cancellations and makeup sessions?

Many private tutors charge clients if an appointment is canceled without 24-hour notice. Others have detailed policies for scheduling makeup sessions. Be sure to clarify with your tutor ahead of time.

9

What if your child doesn't improve?

Find out what the necessary steps are for choosing another tutor within a company and the deadline to make the switch. Does the tutor guarantee certain results? How are they measured? What happens if your child doesn't achieve them?

10

How can you reinforce your child's learning?

Tutoring isn't a magic bullet, so parents play an important role in helping those lessons stick. Ask the tutor for suggestions on how you can support your child's learning. Better yet, check in at the end of each session to find out what your child is expected to do before the next one, whether it's practicing her multiplication facts or completing all of her classroom assignments.

◆ Teachers (<http://www.greatschools.org/gk/tag/teachers/>), Tutoring (<http://www.greatschools.org/gk/tag/tutoring/>)



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