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Questions to Ask Tutors

As the parent of a child with learning or attention problems, you've probably become an expert at motivating, organizing, guiding, back-patting, and just generally being available to help your child manage the daily challenges of school and life. Kids with learning and attention issues often need repeated instruction and extra practice — beyond what school and a reasonable amount of homework time can provide — to master academic content and skills. They usually require more time than other kids to organize and complete their school assignments, as well. As a result, no matter how dedicated you are to supporting your child, there are bound to be times when your schedule, your patience, or your skills just don't allow you to provide all the help your child needs. Before you or your child reach "overload," consider hiring a tutor.

Individuals grouped under the generic label of "tutor" have very different levels of training, skills, and experience. Before you search for someone to help your child, you will want to figure out very specifically and concretely both what you expect this person to help your child accomplish, and what your child's current strengths and challenges are. That will determine the kind of tutor you'll look for. For example, if your child with a language-based learning disability (LD) needs to master writing an organized, coherent paragraph, you may need to hire a tutor with skills in both writing instruction and in remedial work with kids with LD.

Before you contact a tutor, ask yourself such questions as:

- What do I expect this person to do — help my child complete homework, build skills, provide enrichment, teach learning strategies, improve her grades?
- What information about my child — as a learner and as a person — would be useful to a tutor? What are her strengths and accomplishments, and what are her challenges? What personality and temperament traits do we need to take into account in a tutoring situation?
- How will the work with a tutor relate to my child's school program?

What Kind of Tutor Can Provide the Help My Child Needs?

Type of Tutor	Skills They Bring	How They Can Help
High school and college students Retired adults Next door neighbor	Patience, warmth, interest in children, ability to encourage kids to plan, start, and finish a task.	Can give you a break by helping your child with homework, listening to her read, taking her to the library to do research, and other activities.

