

## EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE

### Seeking Educational Assistance for your Child: Making an Informed Decision

There has been a growing need for parents to seek and utilize educational assistance for their children. There are a number of reasons why this has occurred. There have been changes made to the public school system increasing the speed at which students are required to learn. If children do experience difficulties, it has become much less difficult to fall behind. Not only has it become increasingly easy to fall behind, often the root of the problem goes undiscovered and even unexplored. This could result in farther problems in the long run. While there are many different ways to supplement a child's education, two common choices are home tutoring and educational learning centres. Both home tutoring and educational learning centers complement the school system and parental involvement, however there are some differences to explore prior to making this decision.

The traditional role of home tutors has been to assist students with homework and exam preparation. While home tutors do offer the convenience of lessons in the home, it is essential to ensure that the tutor have professional credentials and skills. First, be sure the home tutor is an Ontario certified teacher. This is important, as it will ensure they have both the subject knowledge and the technical skills required to teach your child. Second, insist that there is a homework component to the program that the tutor has developed for your child, as practice and study of a newly acquired skill are essential for mastery.

A good educational learning centre has many advantages as well. One particular advantage is that all employees are screened. In the case of Grade Expectations, all teachers are Ontario certified teachers. Another advantage offered by a learning centre is a formal academic assessment. This helps the centre develop an effective individualized academic program for each student. Often, a student's academic challenges are not straightforward: a student requiring assistance in science may require more work in mathematics; a student with spelling problems may need to improve word recognition skills. Without a thorough academic assessment these needs may not be uncovered. With a detailed and customized student program, a professional learning centre will provide the best environment for your child to learn. Individual classrooms, a diversity of materials and a friendly environment enable children to succeed academically and to increase their self – confidence. Lessons can be reinforced in creative ways through educational computer exercises, games and other resources. Finally, a student's progress will be enhanced by formal and regular practice at home of new skills acquired in class. Students at learning centres are taught how to learn, as opposed to how to pass a test, or how to catch up with their classmates. The skills taught and reinforced at a good learning centre will stay with the students throughout life as they are applicable not only throughout school, but in the work force as well.

There are many factors that come into play when choosing supplemental education tools for children. It is important to ensure that both the child's needs, and the parents' needs are being met. Both home tutors and learning centres have advantages, and ultimately the choice comes down to the individual and their needs. Like home tutors, educational learning centres vary, so chose wisely. Visit the centre: evaluate its philosophy, the physical environment, the student-teacher ratio, teacher qualifications, assessment tools, its academic resources and its overall results.