

May 2010

Dear Families,

It finally appears that summer is almost here, so (hopefully) you are looking forward to many family adventures. While it is important to make time for fun for your child (especially unstructured fun), it is also important not to lose focus of their learning needs over the next two or three months.

Did you know that most children lose the equivalent of more than two months of learning during the summer? Experts attribute this loss to a lack of formalized learning activities, improper nutrition over the summer, and less structure (which often leads to less sleep). This “summer loss” can result in children being behind when they re-enter school.

There are a few things that you can do to lessen the impact of “summer loss” on your child:

- Read the article on critical thinking inside this newsletter. As you incorporate those ideas, you are giving your child the gift of higher-level thinking skills.

- Make sure that your child is eating regular and nutritious meals and that s/he is getting enough sleep during the summer. Both of these things are critical to brain development.
- Be physically active outdoors. Both exercise and regular contact with nature have been shown to improve children’s focus and thinking skills.
- Finally, enroll your child in programs that focus on mind, body and fun – like the ones we offer at Tutor Time. Our summer programs keep your child “smart” while they explore all of the fun and excitement that summer has to offer.

Summer should be about lazy days of nothingness mixed with fun adventures of togetherness. However, while school may seem to be a distant thought, make sure that learning is still an integral part of your child’s summer pursuits.

Respectfully,
The Education Team

How Do I Encourage My Child To Think Critically?

Do you want to improve your child’s performance in school and in life? Help her learn how to think critically. Children who think critically know “how” to think instead of “what” to think. The result? They can solve problems and make smart decisions. And they are able to figure out what they believe and how they should act. These are great tools for resisting peer pressure as they get older.

What is critical thinking? Critical thinking is the process of thinking clearly and logically. Children who think critically can see the whole picture and explore different viewpoints, alternatives and consequences. These skills allow them to carefully make a decision or solve a problem, and to understand why they reached a certain conclusion.

Here are some ways to help your child sharpen his or her critical thinking skills:

1. Be curious:

Encourage your child to ask lots of questions. Remember there is no such thing as a silly question. Thank your child for asking the question, and tell her about a time when you asked a question and found a new and surprising answer. Try this technique: when your child asks you a question, don’t be too quick to answer. Instead, take the time to ask her what she thinks. Letting your child share her opinions gives her a chance to practice what she knows. And her ideas may just spark a wonderfully interesting conversation between the two of you.

2. Keep an open mind:

You can set a real life example by how you handle disagreements between your children or between your child and his friends. If you listen calmly to both sides of the story before taking action, you will show them the importance of hearing all the facts before reacting.

3. Think things through:

Help your child explore a problem carefully before deciding what to do. Also model this behavior for your child with your own choices. Example: your child wants to watch a

What is Tutor Time® LifeSmart™?

Tutor Time® LifeSmart™ was designed by early childhood specialists and national experts to prepare children for kindergarten, elementary school and beyond. Because we know that our society places a strong emphasis on particular academic disciplines, the Tutor Time LifeSmart curriculum gives children particularly strong foundations in:

Reading & Writing

Our WordSmart™ and Phonics Express programs support and guide emerging writing skills in large and small group activities. The Book Center provides children with a quiet place to explore quality literature. The Language Center provides them with the tools and materials they need to explore the written word. Journaling and interactive activities extend learning at home.

Mathematics

Our MathSmart™ program means that counting, numbers and mathematical concepts play an important role in Tutor Time classrooms. The Math Center gives children daily opportunities to join in number games, sort and investigate patterns. During MathSmart Circle Times, teachers lead activities that allow children to actively explore important math concepts.

Science

Our NatureSmart™ Circle Times give children the chance to perform experiments, investigate properties and observe cause and effect. The Nature Center provides children with a rich array of natural materials and tools, encouraging them to explore their understanding of the natural world and actively build scientific thinking skills.

If you have questions about the Tutor Time® classroom experience, please speak with your director or contact us at ttinfo@tutortime.com.



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TUTOR TIME
CHILD CARE / LEARNING CENTERS
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Agents T²: Savin' the World Summer Camp.

Join us for our fresh Agents T²: Savin' The World Summer Camp — with up to 10 or more one-week sessions of super-spy excitement and globe-trotting adventure! Here's a peek at what's in store...

- Agent Olympiad Sports Camp
- Creature Feature Animal Camp
- Operation: Rainforest Rescue Nature Camp
- Moon Mayhem Space Camp
- and intriguing activities that'll keep every kid engaged



IT ONLY TAKES ONE GREAT EXPERIENCE TO INSPIRE YOUR CHILD FOR LIFE.

If you would like to respond to anything you read, have parenting questions or child development topics that you'd like to see explored in future issues of this monthly newsletter, please e-mail us at education@tutortime.com. We would love to hear from you!

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Creating Character

This program invites children to explore what it means to be a person of character. This month's book is How Do Dinosaurs Clean Their Rooms? by Jane Yolen and Mark Teague. The story demonstrates how to care for one's things. Pick an area in your home and support your child in cleaning it up. Make it fun by using soapy water and cloth to wipe items down and make them shiny.

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movie on TV, but she is very tired. Suggest that she think about how she could see the movie and get the rest she so badly needs. Has this situation ever come up before? What did she do in the past? Did it work out well? Encourage your youngster to brainstorm some options. Have her consider the plusses and the minuses of her options. If she needs suggestions, throw out some of your own ideas like recording the movie and watching it the next morning.

Encourage your child to:

- Analyze situations and ask "I wonder why" questions. For example: on a walk, you both notice a patch of flowers growing in the middle of someone's lawn. Have a discussion about how you think they got there. Ask, "I wonder why they are growing there?"
- Draw conclusions. For example: your child hears from someone that his best friend doesn't like him anymore. Suggest that your child think about who told him this. Is that person a good friend? Is the best friend still being nice to him? If nothing has changed between them, the news may not be true.
- Make decisions. One way you can help your child boost his critical thinking skills is to let him make day-to-day decisions – about what to wear, which snacks to eat, or when to walk the dog that day with you.
- Provide reasons. Help your child think about reasons for doing, or not doing something before she expresses her opinion. As your child grows older, it will become even more important for her to be able to communicate her ideas so others will listen and understand. Thinking for herself will help her stick to her convictions or opinions and resist the temptation to "go along with the crowd."

Extend the Tutor Time® Experience Into Your Home

There are many ways to support your child's growth and development at home. Here are some activities you can do together that will build all of your child's Smarts.

Infants – Sit on the floor with your infant. Pick up one of their toys, place it inside of a shoe box and put the lid on. Hand the box to your child. Are they able to find the toy? Depending on your child's age, you might consider leaving the lid off.

Toddlers/Twaddlers – Roll up one of your child's socks into a ball. Stand away from your child and toss the sock ball to him. Have your child toss the ball back to you. Depending on his throwing ability, you might want to take this activity outside.

Preppers – (Do this activity outside.) Place a small amount of water inside a bucket along with any type of brush you may have. Encourage your child to paint different surfaces using the water.

Preschool/Pre-K – Bring out your child's crayons along with some paper. Both of you should color a picture using only red, yellow and orange colors. When you are finished, switch pictures with your child. Come up with a story about the picture she made and encourage her to come up with a story about the picture you made.

Kindergarten/Adventure Club – Gather small snack foods you already have at home (pretzels, raisins, peanuts, mini crackers, etc). Place the ingredients into separate containers and put out measuring spoons and measuring cups. Encourage your child to count and measure the different ingredients and place them into plastic baggies. When they're done, have them write down the amounts they used for each.

You've Got to Move It! Move It!

If you are an adult who has cared for a young child, than you know how it feels to "Move it!" Young children are constantly in motion. While it can be exhausting to be an adult caring for a child, it is important that they have many opportunities to move because that is how they learn. That's why at Tutor Time®, we incorporate a lot of movement into our classrooms.

We also know that some people are better at moving than others. Harvard Professor Howard Gardner describes this in his theory of Multiple Intelligences as being "Kinesthetically Intelligent." At Tutor Time, we call it "BodySmart™."

Your child is invited to develop his BodySmart skills in a variety of ways in the LifeSmart™ classroom. While in the Movement Center, he can use props to learn how large muscle motions like waving his arms can be visually enhanced while holding a scarf. During BodySmart activities he develops balance, large muscle control, and the ability to use his muscles to accomplish a task.

Being BodySmart is important for your child to maintain a healthy lifestyle for the rest of his life. To support him in learning about his body, how it moves and what it needs, your child is also invited to participate in Fitness For Life™ activities. When participating in the Fitness for Life program your child learns about nutrition, exercise, relaxation and how to be healthy.

Tutor Time offers your child many opportunities to become a BodySmart kid. The next time you are able to sit and take a break while your child zooms around the house just think, "I sure do have a smart kid!"



Focus on Learning

When you walk into your child's classroom, you may see a group of children busy creating or building block structures. At Tutor Time, we know that children learn best through hands-on experiences. Playing an active role in any learning process is truly the best way for all of us to learn. Not only does block play help teach children new skills, it also offers an almost infinite variety of opportunities for self-expression. You may see children creating amazing block patterns on the floor or engaging in unbelievable engineering feats while building a bridge.

Here are just some of the concepts your child is developing while playing with blocks:

- Generalizations about balance, gravity and space
- Observation skills, such as noticing similarities and differences while exploring the different shapes, sizes and colors of blocks
- Math and science concepts, such as one-to-one correspondence, geometry, invention and discovery
- Creativity as she uses her imagination
- Problem-solving skills and new vocabulary as she describes, builds and pretends
- Social and literacy skills like negotiation and compromise as she works with others to build and change collaborative inventions



The next time you are in your child's Tutor Time classroom, notice the pleasure that block play brings. It involves the whole person – muscle and senses, intellect and emotion, individual growth and social interaction.