

February
2007

F.O.C.U.S. Newsletter

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Next Members' Meeting

March 13, 2007
7:00 p.m. - 9 p.m.
At the F.O.C.U.S. Centre

"Measuring a Child: What Makes a Good Assessment Helpful and How Does it Help"

Focus on Children's Understanding in School

Members' Meeting - March 2007

Having an assessment of your child's strengths and weaknesses, as well as any specific learning or attentional problems that may be present, can be a very useful and exciting exercise. But it can also pose dangers and create difficulties. Dr. Jadis Blurton will explore the ways that an

assessment can help, not hurt, and will explain what to look for (and what to avoid) when trying to find needed information.

Dr. Blurton is an expert in child development and education. As a former teacher, professional psychologist, and the mother of six children, she has worked with

these issues from several different perspectives and is able to blend a personal and professional understanding of the fears and benefits related to educational testing.

Please note this will be an evening meeting from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

STOP A TANTRUM IN 4 STEPS

Your kid is about to enter meltdown mode as you tell him that he must clean his room before going out to play. What can you do to save the situation? Follow this advice from Tim Murphy, Ph.D., author of *The Angry Child*.

- **Stay calm.** You need to set the tone of the

exchange. If you use a negative tone, your child's anger may grow.

- **Listen.** Many tantrums can be prevented by just letting your kid vent.

- **Do a logic check.** Ask him, "Is what you're doing going to get you what you want?"

- **Disarm him with humor.** Sometimes a

silly comment (such as asking him if he thinks all three of his hands can pick up his toys) can brighten the mood and distract even the most enraged child. Just be sure your comment doesn't appear to make light of the situation and therefore make things worse.



HAPPY LUNAR NEW YEAR!

KUNG HEI FAT CHOI!

F.O.C.U.S. Centre

2909 Pacific Plaza
418 Des Voeux
Road West

PHONE:

852 2849 8218

FAX:

852 2849 8218

E-MAIL:

info@focus.org.hk

<http://www.focus.org.hk>

CHOOSING A TUTOR FOR YOUR CHILD

Tips from the National Centre for Learning Disabilities

Many parents seek additional help for their children by having them work with tutors. Tutors can provide individualized and specialized assistance that will enhance children's learning skills and support their teacher's instructional work in the classroom. Listed below are a few suggestions for parents to help ensure a good match between a student and tutor.

Identify Your Child's Needs:

- Determine the specific subject areas of need.
- Make note of learning strategies, strengths, and weaknesses.
- Assess organizational and study skills.

Include Your Child in the Selection Process:

- Discuss the goals of tutoring.
- Assess attitude and motivation about working with a tutor.
- Find out whether your child has a preference for the gender of the tutor.

Include Your Child's Teacher in the Decision-Making:

- Confirm the need for extra help.
- Prioritize the work that the tutor and your child will cover.
- Make sure that the teacher will work collaboratively with the tutor.
- Formulate a plan for increased feedback from the teacher regarding your child's progress.
- Request information and materials that will help students link their new skills to classroom success.

Identify Options:

- Look into private tutors (experienced teachers with advanced degree, undergraduate or graduate students, high school students, volunteers).
- Look into after-school programs (which can provide a structured learning environment and adult assistance).

Ask about Credentials and Previous Experience of Potential Tutors:

- Discuss their formal academic training.
- Discuss their previous teaching experience.
- Discuss their previous tutoring experience (work with children of the same age, experience with the specific issues that need to be addressed).

Discuss the Format and Structure of Tutoring Sessions:

- Decide on the number of sessions per week.
- Find a convenient location for tutoring (one that will allow work to be done effectively).
- Assess costs (regular fees, additional costs for materials or transportation).

Determine the Nature of Work to be Covered:

- Decide how much time will be devoted to the direct support of school work (homework, book reports, term papers, writing assignments, studying for tests).
- Decide how much time will be devoted to independent skill building (learning and study skills, reading, writing, research).

Determine How the Tutor Will Coordinate with Others:

- Formulate a plan for the tutor to have regular communication with school personnel.
- Formulate a plan for the tutor to have on-going communication with parents (including the assessment and reporting of progress and proposed modifications to the teaching approach).

Finding the right match between a student and a tutor (or after-school program) can be a time-consuming process that requires careful thought and planning. The rewards, as measured by improved schoolwork and increased self-confidence, are well worth the effort.

Next Members' Meeting

Tuesday, **March 13**, 2007, 7:00 p.m. – 9 p.m.
F.O.C.U.S. Centre
2909 Pacific Plaza, 418 Des Voeux Road West