

News & Announcements

Spring Workshops

Smart Tutor Referrals is presenting three great workshops for students this spring:

▶ **Study Skills for Academic Success**

2.5 hours

Interested in learning techniques to help you get organized, manage your time, and memorize more? Learn the skills and how to apply them.

▶ **Essay Writing**

2.5 hours

Essay writing is an important academic skill for students and returning students. Students will review: essay styles and formats; how to collect and prioritize ideas; how to express thoughts clearly; and how to cite research. Learn to structure writing.

▶ **Provincial Exam Prep**

2.5 hours

If you know how to prepare for and write exams, your confidence and results will improve! In this interactive workshop, students will learn how to: build exam confidence; prepare for exams; use memory techniques; write exams.

For dates, times, rates or more information on workshops, visit us online, contact us via telephone, or register directly through Pearkes or Juan de Fuca Recreation Centres.

Happy New Year

Gung Hay Fat Choy! - January 29th, 2006 was Chinese New Year. This is another opportunity to renew your goals and intentions for the upcoming year.

'Support' and 'harmony' are key words for this Year of the Dog.

Becoming Reading Ready

by *Dahlia Miller*

This article was originally published in the February 2004 edition of Island Parent Magazine. Although the focus is on helping children to learn, the same tips and ideas could be applied for new second language learners.

"Helping children see all the many uses for reading and writing will give them a red carpet to the world."

Karen Stephens

Reading readiness doesn't develop overnight - it needs to be cultivated over years. Helping your child to become reading ready is an excellent opportunity for you to build a positive learning relationship with her. So, you don't have to wait - you can share the joy of books, songs, language and reading with your child right from the start.

Supporting Very Young Children (and New 2nd Language Learners) in Pre-Reading

- ▶ Talk to your baby and child often. Children who've grown up with a rich and varied vocabulary have a strong advantage when it comes to learning to read. So, have lots of conversations with your baby; sing nursery rhymes and bedtime songs; comment on what is happening. Vary your tone and vocabulary. As your child learns to speak, ask questions and listen for her answers.

- ▶ Be sure that there is an abundance of variety in your child's environment. A stimulating environment with many colours, textures, voices, spoken words, toys, books and experiences will increase your child's natural desire to "read" what's happening.

- ▶ Encourage experimentation and respond with positive feedback. If your baby reaches for an object and grasps it, congratulate her on her accomplishment. Remember, confident learners enjoy learning.
- ▶ Encourage those quiet times of concentration when your child is focused and busy.
- ▶ Let your child see you reading for enjoyment.
- ▶ Read to your child - include books in the daily routine. Use interesting tones and emphasize important words to help children follow the story if they are old enough. Talk about the story and the pictures in the books you are reading.
- ▶ Give chewable, suckable, and bangable books to your baby. It is never too early for children to enjoy kicking back with a good book of their own. Also, be sure that there are a variety of books within your child's reach.

In the beginning stages of pre-reading, you are building your child's listening and verbal skills as well as skills of gross and fine motor coordination, observation, concentration and the ability to follow directions.

Other Activities to Develop Pre-reading Skills

- ▶ Play "I Spy".
- ▶ Play a simple rhythm with a spoon and ask your child to repeat it.
- ▶ Place 4 objects on a table; let the child look at the objects; remove

About Us

Our Mission Is:

- ▶ To provide top quality, flexible learning support and service to students and parents of students through:

*Superior private tutoring
matched specifically to
each student's needs.*

*Stimulating workshops
building skills in a practical
and creative way.*

- ▶ To enhance students' skills and increase learning confidence through individualized support, recognizing each student's unique abilities.
- ▶ To improve the quality of life, in individuals and communities through education.

Our tutors are certified teachers and professionals. Each is carefully screened and selected to match individual students' needs.

We help students to achieve.

For more information, and free study tips, visit us on-line at:

www.SmartTutorReferrals.com

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one and ask her which object you took away.

- ▶ Place several objects in a bag; ask your child to reach in without looking; have her describe the object or tell you what it is.
- ▶ Look at pictures together and ask your child to select an object in the picture.
- ▶ Play "Simon Says".
- ▶ Play catch with your baby.
- ▶ Encourage scribbling, colouring and jigsaw puzzles.
- ▶ When your child does any artwork, write her name on it.

Supporting Older Children/ Students in Pre-Reading

- ▶ Talk about the stories you read together. Make up stories about what happens after the book ends.
- ▶ With sidewalk chalk or an activity book, your child can practise tracing shapes or completing mazes or dot-to-dot pictures.
- ▶ Notice signs when you are out or labels on packages as you are shopping. This draws attention to the fact that the written word is part of everyday life.
- ▶ Visit the library for story time and to offer your child a large selection of books.
- ▶ As you read to your child, slide your finger along the text so she can see that she needs to attend to the print in a particular direction.
- ▶ Sound your child's name out as you spell it. An awareness of the sounds of the letters of the alphabet helps very much in later reading.

- ▶ Play games of grouping and classification like placing 6 objects on a table and asking which objects belong together or which object doesn't belong. You can build on this activity as your child matures to ask which objects have the same beginning sound.
- ▶ You can make crafts with letters by cutting out letters in construction paper and gluing them to index cards; making a scrap book with one letter per page, pasting pictures of things that begin with that letter onto the page (begin with 4 or 5 letters that are easy to tell apart like "m," "s," "j," "a," and "k"); or you could make cards with a letter on the front and an object on the back – again begin with 4 or 5 letters that are easy to distinguish – these cards can be used to play Memory, Go Fish or another card game.
- ▶ Later on, put letters or words in your child's environment without pressuring the child to focus on or read the words. The idea here is to build familiarity with the shapes and look of words and the alphabet and to incorporate words into the child's environment. For example, you might give your child some alphabet toys; make an alphabet line and put it up on the wall; put magnetic letters on your fridge; write your child's name on any lunch containers; for your 4 or 5 year old, you might even put word cards around the house on things – "table" "counter" "stereo".

Remember, children's brains grow and develop through stages. Decoding visual symbols (i.e. reading) is a complex skill that your child will likely be able to tackle somewhere between ages 5 and 7. In the meantime, relax, have fun, talk with your child and enjoy her learning experience.

*"It is not how fast we learn that counts.
It is the learning that counts."*

Anonymous