

Why Hire a Tutor?

By Jessie Brumfiel

More parents today in Santa Barbara, Santa Ynez and San Luis Obispo see tutoring as a natural add-on to their child's classroom learning. They realize even top schools aren't designed to focus individually on their child. And with private lessons in athletics and music so common, a private tutor for math, science or other subjects makes good sense.

Reasons to Hire a Tutor

Parents in Santa Barbara, Santa Ynez or San Luis Obispo who have hired a tutor usually mention one or more of these motivations:

Their gifted child is bored.

Many kids are eager for harder academic work, but it's not best for them to skip a grade. Or they're working ahead in math, but at grade level in other subjects. When schoolwork is too easy, children lose interest. A tutor will engage a gifted child, offering special assignments and fun projects in math, science, writing, etc.

Their child is struggling in a subject or two.

If algebra class is 50 minutes but your son needs 60 minutes to learn the concept, he's going to fall behind in algebra and get discouraged. A math tutor will help the child who needs a little extra time. Tutors also re-teach past concepts and answer questions that kids are reluctant to ask in class. Tutors are expert in helping kids regain the motivation and confidence to succeed in math, science, writing, English, or other classes.

Homework and organization help.

Parents often seek a tutor for their child who isn't naturally organized and motivated to get all their homework done to a high level. A 60-minute nightly tutoring session will nudge apathetic or scattered kids to work to their potential. Tutors will help kids manage due dates, get kids un-stuck by clarifying ideas or answering questions, and quality-check homework assignments.

Achieve a goal or fulfill a hope.

Some families have a specific goal in mind when they start with a tutor. They want to raise a C- to a B in calculus, or boost an SAT score 150 points. Other families have more abstract goals. They wish their child liked school more, or sympathize with a child who is trying hard but seeing only mediocre results. A tutor will listen to your hopes, and create a plan to help your child succeed.

Improve study skills and test taking.

Many kids study the same way each year. But what works in 5th grade isn't enough in 7th grade. And the leap from junior high to high school demands a step up in study skills. Kids with lagging study skills benefit immediately from a tutor who helps them increase homework time, pay attention to details, prepare for tests, and read more thoughtfully. A tutor can also ease test anxiety by teaching test-taking skills.

Work around a bad family dynamic.

By the teenage years, kids often will listen to other adults, but not their parents. It's better for the child's grades (and family happiness) to bring in a tutor and remove the parent-child dynamic from the picture. Tutors understand teens and how to motivate them. And with younger children, parents can be too involved - doing all the homework themselves. A tutor returns responsibility to the child, while still providing support.

Their child likes to be tutored.

Parents often hire a tutor for a quick fix - usually to help their child bring up a grade in a tough class. But they'll continue with tutoring for years because their child really likes it. The one-on-one sessions make kids feel special, and signal that the family prioritizes their school success. Kids look forward to showing their tutor great test results, and to having undivided attention as they work on school assignments.

With today's school cut backs in Santa Barbara, Santa Ynez and San Luis Obispo county, it's likely that more parents will try a private tutor and discover the benefits. Tutors are a smart way to ensure your children get the top education they need and deserve for later success in college and life.

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