



# 1. Timing

One of the most common things we hear from parents is:

*“I wish we had called you sooner.”*

This is why, as we all know, hindsight is 20/20. While the clock can't be turned back, we can at least learn something from it.

It can be challenging to know when your son or daughter needs support.

- **If you jump in too soon, they may not invest in the process, and it can send them a negative message about their own capabilities.**
- **If you wait too long, then the hole they may find themselves in can be all that much more challenging to get out of.**

One thing to keep in mind is that it's generally easier to back off from tutoring than to ramp up efforts in an attempt to dig out of a hole. Starting the year strong is such an important factor in how a school year goes.

It never hurts to pick up the phone, ask some questions, and at least have a plan in place. That way, if it's needed, things are ready to go!

## What You Can Do

- Pay close attention to the results of the first few graded assignments.
- Check in with teachers earlier, rather than later.
- Remember that it's easier to back off than to try and dig out of a hole.

## 2. Expecting too much

Any time that we use a service or buy a product, we have an expectation, as we should.

At a restaurant, we expect good service, well prepared food, and an ambience that correlates with the price. When we bring our car in for service, we expect professionalism, a diagnosis of what's wrong, and for the issue to be addressed.

**We don't go to a fast food establishment expecting 5 star cuisine, and we don't go to a mechanic expecting that they will do a brake job for \$50.**

Tutoring is no different. You *should* know what you're getting. [You should understand the process.](#) You *should* have expectations. The key is that the expectations are reasonable and agreed upon.

If a student is getting a D in a class, it's not reasonable to think that they can elevate to an A in one quarter. It may be possible, but it certainly isn't probable.

### What You Can Do

- Make sure you talk to a prospective tutor about your expectations, to make sure there is agreement.
- Think about expectations that are both short and long term.
- Ask if there are periodic check-ins to adjust expectations.

### 3. Not paying attention to the personality match

I recently Googled “Boston Tutoring” and got over 700,000 results!! There are plenty of intelligent people out there, but intelligence doesn’t always translate to being an effective tutor.

**Just because someone can solve calculations in their sleep, write a grammatically perfect essay, or have the periodic table memorized, doesn’t necessarily mean that they can effectively teach that to a student.**

In a classroom, students have no control over whether they click with a teacher, they have to deal with it no matter what. That should never happen with tutoring. For this relationship to be effective, [attention must be paid to the personality of the student and the tutor.](#)

By paying attention to the personality match, there is a greater chance of a genuine connection forming, translating into more effective ways to help the student grow, which is the ultimate goal.

#### What You Can Do

- Think about what kind of personality would work best for your child.
- Ask what the company does to ensure the tutor is a good match.
- Make sure you know what happens if the fit doesn’t work.

## 4. Choosing the least or most expensive option

If you have looked around for tutoring, the difference in rates can be staggering. In many industries, while there are different price points, we usually have an idea of what we will pay. Not so with tutoring.

You can find high school and college students who will gladly help out for \$15/hour. You can also find agencies offering you their “Platinum Package” for \$250+ /hour.

There are premium priced tutors who have wonderful credentials, but aren't effective teachers and mentors. There are student tutors who are inexpensive but don't have the skillset to help students achieve and grow.

It's nearly impossible to say what the quality of these tutors would be based on price alone.

While cost is obviously a consideration, and should be a part of the criteria that is used to [find a tutor](#), it shouldn't be the driving force, or used as a way to gauge the quality of the service you may receive.

### What You Can Do

- Be aware that cost doesn't always equate with competence or quality.
- If a company is too expensive, it doesn't hurt to ask if the rate can be adjusted somewhat.
- Think about tutoring not solely as a cost, but as an investment.

## 5. Not having clear goals

When we first meet with a family, we always make sure it's done in a way that we come away with a great deal of information. That is one reason we sit with parents for a while, and then with the student 1 on 1.

**This is the best way to find out what the parents think needs to be addressed, what the strengths and weaknesses are, and what the goals are for the tutoring.**

It's also a great way to find out how the student feels about where they're at, what their insights are, and what goals they have for themselves. With this information, it's much easier to move forward with a focussed plan, and do so in a way where everyone is on the same page.

In order for expectations to be reasonable, and ultimately to be reached, it's important that there be goals in place.

### What You Can Do

- Give some thought to what you want the tutoring to achieve.
- Think about goals that are not only concrete, like grades, but also process related goals such as a student being more self-directed or organized.
- Ask your daughter or son what *they* want to accomplish with tutoring.

**Don't hesitate to reach out with any questions, or to talk further about your son or daughter's specific needs. We hope you found this helpful.**