

FAQ FOR FINDING ONE-ON-ONE SUPPORT FOR YOUR CHILD

EDUCATIONAL THERAPISTS

Q: What is an educational therapist?

A: An educational therapist is a specialist who provides individualized intensive interventions on behalf of children, adolescents, and adults with learning disabilities or learning problems. Educational therapy services involve both educational and therapeutic approaches for evaluation, remediation, case management, and advocacy on behalf of individuals who are affected. These services are delivered in a wide range of settings, such as private practice, schools (public and private), medical facilities, and learning centers.

Q: What is the difference between an educational therapist and a tutor?

A: An educational therapist provides intensive intervention, formal and informal assessment, and case management for clients with a wide range of learning disabilities and learning differences. A subject matter tutor provides assistance with homework and teaches children requiring private instruction in specific subject matter. Background does not usually include training in exceptionalities, learning disabilities, specific syndromes, and case management.

Q: What special training do educational therapists have?

A: Educational therapists must meet a variety of academic and experiential requirements. See Professional Membership requirements.

Q: How can I get a referral to an educational therapist in my area?

A: If AET does not have a Professional member in your area, contact AET at (800) 286-4267 or use the convenient [referral form](#) to e-mail the AET office. You will be given several referrals in your geographic area.

Q: Do all educational therapists charge the same fees?

A: Fees vary in different locales and among individual educational therapists. Variation in fees may reflect the educational therapist's training and experience.

Q: Are there educational therapists who will work for reduced fees?

A: Some ET's provide reduced-fee services. Contact the AET office for additional information.

Q: Do educational therapists only work in their offices or will they come to my home?

A: Some will travel to your home. If you wish to have an educational therapist come to your home, be sure to request one who travels when you ask for referrals.

Q: How many students does an educational therapist work with in a single session?

A: Usually an educational therapist works one-to-one to deliver a therapeutic program that incorporates an understanding of the student's learning strengths and weaknesses. Sometimes, however, it is to the client's advantage to be in a small group for the purpose of develop social skills or to begin transitioning to a more independent level of functioning. Therefore, some ET's do small group as well as individual work.

Q: What kinds of testing do educational therapists do?

A: An educational therapist conducts formal or informal educational screening, diagnostic, and achievement testing. Educational therapists also analyze testing

conducted by other professionals, to determine levels of academic achievement, student learning style, and areas of strength and weakness when they develop a treatment plan.

Q: Do all educational therapists use the same methods for remediation?

A: Methods vary among educational therapists. Most educational therapists draw from a large number of methods and techniques to design a program that meets the unique individual needs of the client.

Q: What is case management in educational therapy?

A: The educational therapist communicates with the family, and other professionals who work with the client, employers, etc. in order to coordinate services and facilitate better understanding of the client's learning needs and development. This communication takes place only with the explicit consent of the client or client's parents. Case management entails communication with teachers, the school counselor and/or learning specialist, speech and language therapist, occupational therapist, psychologist, social worker, or psychiatrist. An educational therapist often attends school staffings to share information and develop more effective IEP's and 504 plans.

Q: How can I find professionals who work in related fields?

A: AET has many Allied Professional members. These members are licensed to work in their particular professions. [Contact the AET office](#) if you desire a referral to an Allied Professional member.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER ASKING ANY PROFESSIONAL:

1. How will you evaluate my child to determine if he or she has a problem?
2. How do you put children at ease and help them understand why they are being evaluated?
3. Will the parents be involved in the evaluation process? If yes, how?
4. If there is a problem, how will you determine the extent of the problem?
5. How much time will your basic evaluation take (and how much will it cost)?
6. After the basic assessment, will further evaluation be necessary, and if so, how much time will be involved (and how much will it cost)?
7. In cases of financial hardship, are fees negotiable?
8. Are your services covered by insurance, and if so, with what insurers do you deal?
9. Will we have a follow-up conference to discuss your findings? How soon after the evaluation does this usually occur?
10. Will my child be included in the follow-up conference? If so, how?
11. Will we receive a written report? How long does it usually take to receive the report?

- 12.** At the conference or in the written report will you offer specific suggestions about how to solve (or alleviate) the problem?
- 13.** How would you describe your professional style - direct, businesslike, informal, etc.?
- 14.** Will you act as an advocate for my child, and if so, in what ways?
- 15.** How much experience have you had in working with children like my child - similar age, similar problems?
- 16.** In what ways will you communicate/cooperate with school personnel (counselors, advisers, administrators, learning specialists) to help them understand and solve my child's problems?
- 17.** What role will parents play in this process from start to finish?
- 18.** Is a normal session 60 minutes?

Before any meeting with a professional you should review all of the information available about your child and take it with you to the consultation or evaluation. Report Cards, teachers' comments, testing results, documentation of any existing medical conditions, writing samples, letters of recommendation - literally any information that might help a professional diagnose the problem. And finally, you might want to keep a journal in which you note your own observations (and perhaps those of others) of your child's behavior, attitude, successes, frustrations, etc. This comprehensive folder of material collected in a systematic way, and untainted by the emotional baggage often attendant in these cases, should improve the prospects for successful remediation.

LEARNING SPECIALISTS

Learning Specialists work with students who are experiencing academic difficulty or who have diagnosed learning differences. They identify learning styles, analyze and interpret tests (and sometimes administer them). review other pertinent information, prescribe specific, appropriate, and practical learning strategies, and coordinate a team effort which usually includes teachers, other educational professionals, physicians, and the student and parents. They may also tutor and help in the areas of time management, organization, and study skills.

Specific Questions:

- 1.** Have you ever been a classroom teacher?
- 2.** Have you ever worked for any schools in an official capacity as a learning specialist?
- 3.** If you do testing, what tests do you typically administer? What do they measure?
- 4.** What approaches do you use to help students improve time management, organizations, study skills, and test taking?
- 5.** How do you decide which strategies will work best for my child?
- 6.** If you tutor, how long are sessions, how flexible is your schedule, and what is your policy on cancellations?

TUTORS

Tutors provide learning support to students who are struggling in a subject area. They help with comprehension of specific content and may also work on study skills, test taking and organization.

Specific Questions:

- 1.** How long have you been a tutor?
- 2.** Have you been a classroom teacher?
- 3.** Have you worked with other children from my child's school?
- 4.** What kind of feedback will we receive about my child's progress?
- 5.** What experience have you had in preparing students for SATs?

EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANTS

The educational consultant helps parents and children with school placement. The consultant develops a detailed profile of the student from school reports, testing results, medical information, and from interviews with the parents and the child. Students are asked to share their perceptions about the school experience and to discuss their specific strengths, weaknesses, special interests and needs. This information is used as a basis for recommending appropriate school options including public, independent, day, boarding, special and parochial.

Specific Questions:

- 1.** Do you work with students who have generalized school problems or do you specialize in a particular area?
- 2.** Do you work with all age groups or do you specialize?
- 3.** What are the most important factors in finding the "right" school for my child?
- 4.** How much time do you spend researching schools and making personal contact with school representatives?
- 5.** Is there a single rate for placement or do you charge an hourly rate?
- 6.** What aspects of your professional background have prepared you for your role as an educational consultant?
- 7.** If you recommend private school, will you also help us understand how financial aid works and help us with the process if we decide to apply for it?
- 8.** Will you help us until we find the "right" placement, no matter how long it takes?