

Parents—You Can Help Enrich Your Child’s Education

If your child is struggling in school or could use enrichment, you may have considered hiring a private tutor. While tutors can provide wonderful support, hiring one is often expensive, and the time spent with your child is limited. In place of a tutor, supplementing your child's education yourself may be just the solution you're looking for.

✓ **Assess the Need**

Does your child struggle with reading or have trouble remembering math facts? Maybe she needs extra support with the school curriculum or could benefit from additional challenges of trying more advanced reading material or more sophisticated math work. Parents can play important roles in addressing their child's academic needs. Start by choosing one or two subject areas on which to concentrate. A focused approach to tutoring will help your child grasp the concepts you've chosen to highlight. Cramming too many different concepts into your lessons may leave your child feeling overwhelmed, and the topic coverage will be spotty.

✓ **Engage the Teacher**

Meet with your child's teacher and determine what she sees as your child's unique learning style. Is your child a strong visual or auditory learner? Perhaps he learns best by doing. Do songs and catchy mnemonics help him internalize a concept? Or, perhaps a lot of review and repetition suits his style. The feedback will help you capitalize on your child's learning style as you supplement his education.

✓ **Connect with the Curriculum**

If your child is struggling in a specific subject area, ask for a copy of the curriculum, benchmarks, and concepts your child is expected to master by the end of the school year. If enrichment is what you're looking for, ask if you can have access to the benchmarks from the next grade level to use as a guide. You may also wish to ask the teacher for additional activities or worksheets that complement what's being taught in school. Giving your child a double dose of daily concepts learned in class each day can really make a difference.

✓ **Think Like a Teacher**

Teachers use a variety of materials to drive a concept home. Many teachers find these materials—such as workbooks, flashcards, games, and curriculum guides—at local education supply stores.

✓ **Use the Internet**

Resources for Parents: There are hundreds of websites that offer teachers quick and easy access to lesson ideas, worksheets, and learning experiences that can be printed and used immediately. Parents can just as easily make use of these resources. Some websites that teachers love include [ABC Teach](#), [A to Z Teacher Stuff](#), and [Busy Teachers Café](#).

✓ **Resources for Kids:** There are numerous interactive websites dedicated to helping children learn, practice, and master concepts. Many sites are free and, with parental supervision, children can access them whenever they wish. Check out some of the following websites for fun ways to supplement your child's education :

- [Funbrain](#): An excellent online destination for kids, this site provides a variety games for different subject areas. Parents can also create quizzes that their children can take online.

- [Primary Games](#): You'll find lots of games on this website to reinforce concepts taught in school. There are also online stories and activities available for children to work on.
- [The Yuckiest Site on the Internet](#): This comprehensive resource with the funny name is wonderful for kids interested in science.
- [Yahooligans](#): Yahooligans is an entire search engine dedicated to kids.

If you're willing to pay a small subscription fee, the following websites offer tutorials, activities, online lessons, and other academic experiences:

- [Enchanted Learning](#): This classroom favorite presents stories, information, worksheets, references, and much more on subjects ranging from reading to science.
- [Teach R Kids Math](#): This math tutorial website offers self-paced lessons, online quizzes, and fun math-learning experiences. Your child proceeds at her own pace through the curriculum.
- [Brainpop!](#): Brainpop is a unique teaching resource that offers funny, interesting, and engaging educational videos on a plethora of topics. Many educators subscribe to this website to enhance their teaching. Brainpop offers family subscriptions, too.

✓ **Look into the Library**

Another terrific resource to complement your child's education is your local library. Most libraries have excellent fiction and non-fiction collections. Get your child started on a series or begin an author study together. You may want to talk to your child about joining a reading contest, book club, or going to library-sponsored special events. If your child is a struggling reader, taking her to the library to get her own library card can build confidence and excitement about reading. The library can be overwhelming for kids, so help your child by narrowing down her choices to a specific topic, author, or section.

✓ **Hit the Road**

Allowing your child to practice his skills in the everyday world will make a huge difference in his grasp of concepts taught in school. If your child is struggling with the concept of making change, give him some money to spend and head to the market. If he's working on telling time, buy him a watch, write out a schedule, and ask him to keep the family on track for the day. Ask a struggling reader to read street signs, billboards, menus, and other print while you're out running errands. Or, play a game of *I Spy*, searching for letters, words, or numbers on long car trips.

- ✓ How about heading out on a family field trip? Educational excursions to local museums, historical sites, and nature conservatories can provide good family bonding experiences on top of being a wonderful way to supplement your child's education.

- ✓ Before you hire a tutor, recognize all of the options you have to do it yourself! You are your child's first and best teacher. Taking the time to gather some resources, assess your child's needs, and think about learning experiences that exist in everyday life will undoubtedly result in an improved outcome at school.

✓ ***About the Author***

Erika Scott is a former elementary school teacher. She is currently the Director of Operations for Abrakadoodle in Minneapolis, Minnesota and the proud mother of one.