

Community Club TUTOR HANDBOOK 2024–2025



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Tutor Roles and Responsibilities	1
Community Club Basics.....	1
Additional Events	4
Academic Awards	4
Community Club Policies	5
Community Club Leadership.....	6
Additional Resources	7
Successful Approaches.....	7
Post-High School/College Preparation	8
Learning Styles	10
Students with Special Challenges	10

Community Club is an all-volunteer mission of
The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church
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NYAPC welcomes all people to community, worship, service, and leadership.

INTRODUCTION

Community Club is one of the oldest tutoring and mentoring programs in Washington, D.C., and it is entirely volunteer-run. It has been operating continuously since February 1962. The first Community Club student to graduate from high school was in 1968; our first college graduate was in 1973. Today, nearly all Community Club students graduate high school, and over 200 of our graduates have earned college degrees.

Each Thursday evening from late August to late May, up to 110 students and their tutors meet one-on-one to do schoolwork during our Study Hall at the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, 1313 New York Avenue NW (near Metro Center). Students come to Study Hall from public high schools and middle schools (including public charter schools) throughout the city. They arrive by public transportation, on foot, and by car. They hear about Community Club from relatives, friends, or school staff.

Tutors, who come from all faiths and backgrounds, become role models for their students. They are sources of stability in adolescents' frequently chaotic lives. They take an active interest in how their students are doing in school and in life. They praise, reward, and encourage their students to do well.

The student-tutor relationship often extends beyond Thursday evenings to special outings to movies or restaurants, visits to each other's homes, and attendance at school events. Many tutors get to know their students' families. Together, student and tutor decide what shape the mentoring relationship will take. However much tutors give, they generally feel they receive far more from their students in return. A student-tutor partnership typically lasts from two to six years, but many stay in touch long after graduation.

Community Club is just as much about mentoring as it is about tutoring. Although our Thursday evening Study Hall is focused on doing schoolwork, mentorship occurs when you see your student outside of Study Hall. Students enter our program anywhere between 6th and 12th grade, meaning that they grow through ages and life-stages when mentorship is particularly valuable. Your mentorship may cover wide-ranging topics, and your judgment as a mature adult is instrumental in helping our students grow into mature adults themselves.

TUTOR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- ❖ Commit to weekly Thursday night Study Hall from late August through late May. Arrive by 6:50pm — ready to work at 7pm — and stay until 8:10pm. We do meet when public schools do not meet (i.e., holidays, parent-teacher conferences), and we do not expect perfect attendance — occasional absences are okay.
- ❖ Commit for the remainder of the current academic year (through the end of May).
- ❖ Encourage your student's attendance, communication, reliability, and work-ethic.
- ❖ Ensure that your student is working during Study Hall and model that behavior for others (i.e., avoid games and put away phones). Help with academic subjects, though not as an expert.
- ❖ Collect report-cards and monitor your student's grades.
- ❖ Show you care about your student and her/his progress in school. Develop a friendship with your student.
- ❖ Communicate with your student about absences and help your student learn reliability and responsibility.
- ❖ Try to attend Community Club events, Camp in October, the Tutor Workshop, and the May Awards Ceremony.

COMMUNITY CLUB BASICS

Joining Community Club

To join Community Club, first complete a registration-form and read this Tutor Handbook. All new tutors are required to attend an orientation at 6:15pm any Thursday night when Study Hall meets. During your orientation, we'll introduce you to what we do and ask you to decide if you can make the commitment that is required. During the following week, we will check your references and do a basic criminal background check.

The Thursday after your orientation, we will match you with a student if one is available. If a student is not available, we may ask you to be a substitute tutor and return the following week to be matched.

Your First Night Paired with a Student

Your student will either be in middle school (grades 6–8) or high school (grades 9–12); we also allow elementary students (grades K–5) who are younger siblings of Community Club students in middle or high school. For every grade, there is a Class Leader, who will be you and your student’s primary point of contact. During your first night, you should:

- ❖ Get to know your student academically, including her/his current classes, favorite subjects, strengths, and weaknesses. Ask about clubs, sports, arts, music, and other extra-curricular activities.
- ❖ Get to know your student personally, including her/his family, friends, and hobbies.
- ❖ Explain why you’ve come to Community Club and invite your student to do the same.
- ❖ Encourage your student to ask you questions.
- ❖ Review and copy the registration form; discuss and sign the Student-Tutor Contract.
- ❖ Exchange contact information; get contacts for guardians; send the permission slip home with your student.
- ❖ Explain parts of the Tutor Handbook— especially the sections on rules, Camp, and Stay-in-School Scholarships.
- ❖ Emphasize your student’s obligation to bring something to work on every week and arrive at 6:50pm.
- ❖ Commit to communicating any absences in advance and request that your student do the same.
- ❖ Meet your Class Leader; give her/him the registration form and signed Student-Tutor Contract.
- ❖ During the following week, contact your student’s guardian to introduce yourself, ask permission to contact your student, and let them know to sign the permission slip.

Contacting Your Student and Working with Families

During the week after you are paired, you should contact your student’s guardian. Your student will have a cell phone, but it is not appropriate to contact a teenager without the knowledge and permission of her/his guardian. During your initial call to introduce yourself, ask your student’s guardian for permission to contact their child directly. Some guardians may prefer that you contact their child through them. All guardians will appreciate your courtesy and your recognition that they deserve to know when other adults are involved in their child’s life.

While you will first speak with a family member by phone, you will likely first meet the family in person when you attend your student’s school-events (sports, plays, or other extra-curricular activities). Building these relationships is a gradual process. Some guardians like to handle all school-interactions by themselves; some like to partner with you; some are unable to do much but support your interactions with your student. This is another instance where consulting with other tutors and your Class Leader will help you determine the best approach.

During Study Hall

The expectation of all students is to bring homework or another academic-based activity to work on during Study Hall. It is your job as tutor to set and enforce the expectation that your student brings something to work on. Sometimes, students may forget their homework or claim not to have any. Because we arrange seating by grade, classmates nearby might know what to work on. Most schools post homework online. If your student still has nothing to work on, go to the Community Club library to find other academic work to do that is grade appropriate, pick a book to read together, or work on SAT prep. You can even create your own assignment (ideally that matches a subject your student is taking). Ask your Class Leader for activities and suggestions. Please try to avoid playing games, as this can distract other students and risks undermining other tutors who are trying to tell their students that schoolwork is required.

Activities Outside of Study Hall

Do not plan an outside activity, meet outside Study Hall, or give your student a ride until you have received permission to do so from your student's guardian. Your first time seeing your student outside of Study Hall may be at an extra-curricular school-event; you can show up to these public events even if your student does not think to invite you, and it will likely mean a lot to your student that you did so. Additionally, find out what interests your student and choose an appropriate activity. Popular activities among student-tutor pairs include bowling, ice-skating, riding bikes, hanging out at a shopping mall, walking around a new neighborhood, giving your student a tour of your neighborhood, meeting your student's family, going to the movies, playing cards/board-games, eating meals, or doing schoolwork.

Role of Class Leader

Community Club groups students by grade year. Each class has an assigned Class Leader who is an experienced tutor. Class Leaders work with all student-tutor pairs, helping to form connections, provide support, and are there to assist if problems arise. Class Leaders keep track of attendance and student grades. Talk with your Class Leader regularly. They want to get to know you and your student. The more your Class Leader knows about you and your student, the more she/he can help.

Monitoring Grades

Most students attend D.C. Public Schools (DCPS), while others attend public charter schools. The DCPS academic year is four terms/quarters, the dates of which are publicly available. For each quarter, you should ensure that your student provides a report-card (which can also be viewed online), and you should share a copy with your Class Leader. You should use grades as an opportunity to discuss goals with your student and jointly agree on any needed areas of focus.

Absences

Insist that your student contact you in advance, and explain why, if she/he is unable to attend Study Hall on a particular Thursday. This is a common courtesy many teenagers need to be taught. Of course, tutors owe students the same courtesy if they are unable to attend.

If you are unable to attend, contact your student in advance and encourage her/him to attend without you. Tell her/him to arrive on time, check in with your Class Leader, and let your Class Leader know that you won't be able to attend that night. Your Class Leader will try to find a substitute tutor for your student. It is recommended that you also contact your Class Leader to let them know you will be absent.

Students' absences reduce the amount of their Stay-in-School checks, regardless of tutor attendance. If your student did not contact you in advance and does not arrive at Study Hall by 7:10pm: Call her/his guardian or your student directly. If you determine that your student is not coming that night, let your Class Leader know, and we will see if there is an unpaired student you can work with.

If You Must Leave Us

If you run into unanticipated work or family needs and must leave Community Club, tell your Class Leader as soon as possible and tell your student in person (not by text or phone). When you tell your student, be prepared that it may be very sad or emotional for your student, and try to help her/him to understand what you had to think about to make your decision. This dialogue helps young people learn how adults must make decisions and reduces the risk that they will feel rejected or bereft because of the loss.

ADDITIONAL EVENTS

Camp Weekend

In October, Community Club organizes a Camp weekend (in cabins) for all students and tutors in Prince William Forest Park in northern Virginia. We rent a shuttle-bus to take everyone on a Saturday morning, spend one overnight in cabins (there is hot running water and showers in the bathrooms), and return Sunday afternoon. The weekend includes camp-games, outdoor activities, cooking, eating, cleaning after meals, a campfire with s'mores, and other fun activities. The Camp weekend is a great opportunity to get to know and appreciate other aspects of your student, other students, and fellow tutors.

Thanksgiving Tutor-Turkey Party

This annual tutors-only party is held on the Sunday before Thanksgiving and is a purely social, optional occasion. It's a great opportunity to get to know other tutors and make new friends.

Tutor Workshop

Each year, usually around February or March, Community Club provides a Tutor Workshop on a Thursday evening (in lieu of Study Hall). This evening aims to allow tutors to get better acquainted with one another, to learn how to be better tutors, to find out about available tutoring and mentoring resources, to gain insights about how to grow with our students, and to plan new ways to help our students and each other. We often decide on program improvements and launch new activities based on what we learn from each other at the Workshop.

Spring Picnic

In the spring, we try to organize a half-day event at a local park (such as Rock Creek Park) to gather students and tutors for a picnic, frisbee, and other outdoor activities.

Awards Ceremony

On the Thursday evening before Memorial Day in May, our year ends when students, tutors, family, and alumni come together for the Awards Ceremony. We celebrate achievements and recognize elementary, middle, and high school graduates. Seniors and their tutors share reflections. We award scholarships and academic trophies. For graduates, it's a chance to be celebrated. For all students, there are reminders of awards and accomplishments to strive for. We also honor a Tutor of the Year.

Other Events and Summer Events

At various times during the school-year and during the summer, we try to organize other outings for students and tutors. Such outings have included Wizards games, Nationals games, movies, picnics, and pumpkin-picking. Also, it is great for you as a tutor to try to see your student at least once during the summer.

ACADEMIC AWARDS

Academic Achievement Awards

Awards are given each term to the student in each class with the most improved grades, highest grades, and best attendance at Study Hall. The award includes a medal and announcement at Study Hall.

Stay-in-School Scholarships

Stay-in-School Scholarships are a unique feature of Community Club's Study Hall program. These monthly stipends offer an incentive for students to stay in school until graduation, maintain at least a 2.5 grade point average, and minimize hours in after-school employment. The program is open to students in grades 9 through 12 who have participated in Community Club for a minimum of one quarter. Tutors and students should understand that the Stay-in-School Scholarship award can be lost through poor academic performance or excessive absenteeism. That choices have consequences is one of the primary rationales for this program. Each recipient must:

- ❖ Be enrolled in a D.C. public high school or public charter school, grades 9 through 12.
- ❖ Have participated in Community Club for one full quarter.
- ❖ Maintain a grade point average of at least 2.5 or higher. If a student's GPA falls below 2.5 for one quarter, the student remains on scholarship. But if GPA is below 2.5 for a second consecutive quarter, the student loses the scholarship, which will not be restored until the student attains GPA of 2.5 or better for a quarter.
- ❖ Take at least four academic courses per semester or the equivalent (to be determined by the Club Directors).
- ❖ Attend Study Hall regularly, come on time, bring and work on homework each week, give advance notice to her/his tutor and Class Leader of absences, and follow all Community Club policies.
- ❖ Participate in Club activities and help make the club a valuable experience shared by all.
- ❖ Provide her/his report card promptly upon receipt.
- ❖ Amounts depend on grade and attendance (9th \$15/week, 10th \$20/week, 11th \$25/week, 12th \$30/week).

Community Club College Scholarships

Graduates of Community Club are eligible for college scholarships (a modest stipend) each semester. Recipients must attend two meetings each year: one in early January and another in early summer. Participants are asked to share college experiences with one another, their former tutors, and new graduates of Community Club. The exchange of practical advice among current college students has proven valuable to all attendees.

The amount of scholarship takes into account attendance at college meetings, college GPA, and other factors. For details on college scholarships, please contact Community Club leadership, your Class Leader, or the College Advisor.

Competitive College Scholarship Opportunities

Graduating students and collegians have special college scholarship opportunities. Information about applying for these scholarships will be made available via Class Leaders and the College Student Coordinator.

- ❖ Andrew Charles Dornan Memorial Scholarship
- ❖ New Futures Scholarship (by nomination) (Note: This scholarship provides scholarships for Community College or Post-Secondary Certificate Programs)
- ❖ Kathryn Heath Scholarship for Women
- ❖ Marty Jennings Scholarship

COMMUNITY CLUB POLICIES

General Policies

We ask that every adult model the following behaviors and help us enforce them in students.

- ❖ Decorum: Be respectful at all times. Disruptive, rude, and disrespectful behaviors are not permitted and can be cause for discipline, including loss of scholarship and program dismissal. Fighting is not tolerated and can be grounds for dismissal. Community Club leaders will meet with guardians about any of these behaviors.
- ❖ Punctuality: Students and tutors are expected to arrive to Study Hall at 6:50pm and be ready to work by 7:00pm. Food must be put away, and all trash must be cleaned and disposed of, by 7:00pm. Students arriving after 7:20pm will be considered absent for the purposes of attendance and stay-in-school scholarships.
- ❖ Presence: Put your phone away and ask your student do to the same. Unless given permission by you, all students must remain in their seat until dismissal. No playing on elevators or stairwells is permitted at any time. The soda-machine is not for use by students or tutors.
- ❖ Work: Students must bring work every week. If a student does not bring work, the tutor should create an assignment. Games should be minimized so as not to distract other students or undermine other tutors trying to enforce this expectation.
- ❖ Devices: After 7:00pm, students may use mobile/computing devices only for school related purposes. Tutors should model this behavior and only use such devices for similar purposes or urgent matters.
- ❖ Forms: Students must fill out and sign the Student-Tutor Contract and Student Registration Form.
- ❖ Report-Cards: Students must promptly provide their report-card to their tutor and Class Leader.

Remote Policies

We strongly encourage in-person attendance at Study Hall, as we have seen that in-person interaction is most beneficial for students, tutors, and the growth of the student-tutor relationship. Remote participation should occur only on an as-needed basis (for example, if the tutor is out of town or a sick student is healthy enough to work but does not want to expose others to possible illness). Rules for remote participation include:

- ❖ General: All General Policies above apply to remote tutoring, including decorum, punctuality at the start, presence until dismissal, bringing work, and not using other devices.
- ❖ Sickness: If you feel ill, you should stay home, contact your Class Leader and your student or tutor partner, and participate remotely that Thursday.
- ❖ Coronavirus: If you have tested positive for COVID-19 or are otherwise not cleared to participate in-person at school or work, you should participate remotely that week.
- ❖ Zoom: For those participating remotely, we will provide the link for the Community Club Zoom meeting.
- ❖ Approval: You must get advance approval from your Class Leader each time you participate remotely.
- ❖ Testing: While we do not require testing, we encourage you to be tested for COVID-19 if you are not feeling well or have recently been exposed to someone with COVID-19.
- ❖ Vaccines: We encourage students and tutors to get all vaccinations and booster shots.
- ❖ Questions: Any questions should be directed to your Class Leader.

COMMUNITY CLUB LEADERSHIP

Community Club is led by a Core Council of long-time Club volunteers. The organization charter outlines the governance, leadership structure and procedures for Community Club. For the 2024–25 school year, the Core Council includes the following members:

- ❖ Directors: Tom Karr and Shamika Bradley
- ❖ Student Registration: Brendolyn McCarty-Jones, Shamika Bradley, and Jenean McKay
- ❖ New Tutor Coordinator: Phil Telfeyan
- ❖ 12th Grade Class Leader: Michael Coe
- ❖ 11th Grade Class Leader: Susie Campbell
- ❖ 10th Grade Class Leader: Phil Telfeyan
- ❖ 9th Grade Class Leader: Phil Telfeyan
- ❖ 8th Grade Class Leaders: Chris Morrisette

- ❖ 7th Grade Class Leader: Chris Morrisette
- ❖ K through 6th Grade Class Leader: Stephanie Price
- ❖ Online Class Leader: Molly Smith and Mariatu Tejan
- ❖ College Adviser: Mariatu Tejan
- ❖ College Student Coordinator: Laura Krapsho
- ❖ Substitute Tutor Coordinator: vacant
- ❖ Math Zone: David Balan and Moniqua Sawyer
- ❖ Library: Karen Dunlap
- ❖ Student Staff: Tom Karr (set-up) and David Balan (take-down)
- ❖ Stay-in-School Scholarships: Brendolyn McCarty-Jones
- ❖ Camp Coordinator: David Balan, Chris Morrisette, and Tom Karr

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ❖ Printer/Copier: There is a dedicated printer/copier for Community Club in the library. Students and tutors can ask Class Leader to print or copy documents required for Community Club or related to schoolwork.
- ❖ Chrome Books: Community Club has multiple Chrome Books for use during Study Hall. If a computer is needed, please see your Class Leader.
- ❖ WiFi: Please see your class leader for WiFi information.
- ❖ Library: The Community Club library not only has books for fun, but it also has academic resources such as flashcards, textbooks, and SAT prep materials. The library also stocks school supplies such as paper, pencils, calculators, and more. Periodically, Community Club hosts a book-giveaway whereby each student is allowed to choose a book to take home and keep. If you have books you'd like to donate, please talk with your Class Leader or a Community Club librarian.
- ❖ Math Zone: Sometimes students need math help that tutors do not feel they can provide. Community Club has a dedicated space called the "Math Zone". Math-specific tutors are ready and eager to provide support.

SUCCESSFUL APPROACHES

General Schoolwork Tips

Teach inductively. Let your student do the thinking (for example, figuring out why the main character acted that way). Ask questions and check often to see if the reading is understood. Sometimes students are reluctant to do work in the areas in which they have the greatest challenges. When your student says she/he doesn't need any help, ask her/him to explain the assignment. It is a good way to check what your student understands and for you to engage and support the work. Be particularly alert to indicators of academic problems through review of report cards (which can be viewed online), occasional pointed questions, and suggestions to do something different. Encourage self-expression in speaking and writing.

Organization

Teenagers are developing in a myriad of ways. Staying organized is not always a student's strength, and disorganization sows chaos and may lead to an inability to know what homework they have or where to find class notes. As a tutor, you can help your student get organized. Ask to look through any binders or folders and offer suggestions of how to organize information. Ask to look in their backpacks and offer the same. You can talk about where they study at home and offer suggestions of how to set up the space to stay organized and focused.

Math and Science

Work together to solve problems. You don't need to know the answer; say "Let's figure it out," then work together. Encourage your student to tell you what the teacher said. Have your student explain the problem to

you. Help your student find a known reference point to start the problem. Work with what your student knows. Still stuck? Use the Math Zone's talented help to provide tailored math and advanced science support.

Foreign Languages

Flashcards are a favorite fallback and provide useful drills. Use the Library's or make some together.

Reading

Reading is always an area where there can never be enough exposure and practice. Some tips include:

- ❖ Each read the same passage silently, then discuss what was read.
- ❖ Read aloud. Sometimes students are not confident reading, and reading aloud is a way that you as a tutor can see where they are struggling. Offer to take turns reading passages or paragraphs.
- ❖ Pause at complex words to ask your student what the word means. You may need to explain the word and offer examples of use.

Advanced reading suggestions include:

- ❖ Reading poetry aloud to each other offers opportunities to engage your student through rhythm, sound, emotion, and thought. Have your student read for the beat of the meter, the sound of the words, the emotional effect of the poetry.
- ❖ Plays that are assigned in class to be read can be brought to life through readings or through watching videos.
- ❖ Provide opportunities to increase engagement with more advanced novels.

In short, strive to encourage your student to become actively involved in what is read and to avoid the passivity that leads to non-comprehension.

Writing

Writing is an area that can always use work. Encourage students to share their writing with you, offering suggestions for improvement. Sometimes students will struggle knowing how to get started with a writing assignment or how to structure their writing. One way to work together is to have your student dictate to you. Then read the dictation back aloud. Is this what your student wanted to say? Discuss with your student differences between speaking and writing. Have your student keep a diary and share excerpts from it.

Other Skills and Interests

There is more to life than school. Discover your student's interests and skills, including such non-academic interests as music, art, exercise, sports, video games, computers, religion, family, and community.

POST-HIGH SCHOOL/COLLEGE PREPARATION

Helping prepare our students for life after high school is an important goal for Community Club. We recognize that not all students will be interested or ready to attend a four-year college. Community college is a lower-cost alternative to allow students to shore up academic skills and complete basic education requirements, and community colleges also offer the opportunity to transfer to four-year colleges for an undergraduate degree. Trade schools are another option. Talk with your Class Leader and College Advisor for recommendations. To ease the transition from high school to college, students should be encouraged to take the following steps:

9th Grade

- ❖ Get to know your high school counselor.
- ❖ Get involved in school and community activities you enjoy.
- ❖ Earn the best grades possible and take the most challenging (but appropriate) courses.
- ❖ Read on a regular basis, even if you have no school assignments.
- ❖ Begin completing community service hours.
- ❖ Do something constructive with your summer vacation.

10th Grade

- ❖ Stay in touch with your school counselor.
- ❖ If your school offers them, take the PSAT or PLAN in the fall (or start studying for them).
- ❖ Earn the best grades you can and continue to take the most challenging courses you can.
- ❖ Depending on your course schedule, you might consider an SAT II: Subject Test in the spring.
- ❖ Look at the list of senior college acceptances; talk to seniors about their choices.
- ❖ Try college visits if your family is near a college.
- ❖ Continue work on community service hours.
- ❖ Use your summer productively (work, volunteer, take classes, or attend camps).

11th Grade

- ❖ This is the most important year academically: do your best and challenge yourself.
- ❖ Continue to remain involved in activities; try positions of responsibility or leadership.
- ❖ Take the PSAT and/or PLAN in the fall; study for your first SAT and/or ACT.
- ❖ Follow your school's guidelines for meeting with your counselor about the college process.
- ❖ Review the standardized testing schedule from your college coordinator/guidance counselor.
- ❖ With your tutor and counselor, develop an initial list of colleges during the spring.
- ❖ Take advantage of college representative visits to your school and college fairs; research colleges.
- ❖ Continue to work on community service hours.
- ❖ When you select your courses for senior year, get advice and choose wisely.
- ❖ Use your summer productively (work, volunteer, take classes, or attend camps); visit colleges in the summer.

12th Grade

- ❖ Don't forget how important your grades are: the first semester/quarter is critical.
- ❖ Make sure you have completed your 100 hours of community service.
- ❖ Stay involved in activities that you enjoy; take leadership positions and add responsibility.
- ❖ Continue to add or subtract colleges from your list as you learn more about schools.
- ❖ If you apply early, remember that deadlines are just a few weeks after school begins.
- ❖ Ask your teachers, tutors, and others for recommendations well in advance of application deadlines.
- ❖ By Thanksgiving, your list of colleges should be final. Six to eight schools is a good number.
- ❖ Meet deadlines for admissions/scholarships. Allow lots of time for applications and essays.
- ❖ Know what financial aid forms are required and submit them on time.
- ❖ Take advantage of interviews when given the opportunity.
- ❖ Continue to work hard: senior slump can have disastrous consequences.
- ❖ Consider participating in the open house/accepted student programs hosted by colleges.
- ❖ Make your deposit at the school you will attend by the required deadline.
- ❖ If you are on a waiting list, get advice from your school counselor or tutor.

LEARNING STYLES

You may have already learned that your student gains and retains information more successfully in some ways than others. Those ways can be used to your student's advantage.

Visual Learners

- ❖ Make mental pictures using your ability to see and imagine.
- ❖ Write down words and make short outlines of topics to study.
- ❖ Make lists, write notes, and write down assignments. Have a notepad and pencil with you.

Auditory Learners

- ❖ Listen carefully to spoken instructions and information.
- ❖ Sit near the front of the room so others won't distract you.
- ❖ Keep your eyes on the teacher.
- ❖ Clear your desk of all books and papers if you tend to tune out and play with things.
- ❖ Repeat important information silently to yourself.
- ❖ Make up rhyming jingles to remember important information.

Kinesthetic-Tactile Learners

- ❖ Manipulate and handle materials.
- ❖ Remember to wait until directions are given before you start a project.
- ❖ Try to work in different areas of a classroom.
- ❖ Volunteer for class activities that involve movement and activity.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL CHALLENGES

Helping a Student with Learning Disabilities

Ask your student (or guardian) if your student has an individualized education plan ("IEP"). An IEP identifies any learning needs and accommodations that the school is required to provide. Knowing the challenges your student faces will allow you to better understand how you can support them during Study Hall. Class Leaders are a great resource for this support, too. Some commonly accepted factors are:

- ❖ Difficulties with academic achievement and progress.
- ❖ Discrepancies between learning potential and what one actually learns.
- ❖ Uneven patterns of language, physical growth, and academic development.

Unfortunately, not all students who need an IEP have one. As the tutor, you may notice unmet needs and should talk with your Class Leader about how to proceed. Possible steps may include reaching out to the guardian about how to get your student support and reaching out to the school counselor to set up an evaluation.

Early Warning Signs

Problems with schoolwork can involve delays, disorders, and deviations in listening and speaking; difficulty with reading, writing, and spelling; difficulty in organizing thoughts (reasoning); difficulty in remembering information and instructions; and difficulty performing arithmetic. Some symptoms commonly tied to learning disabilities are:

- ❖ Reversals in writing and reading
- ❖ Poor visual-motor coordination
- ❖ Hyperactivity and impulsivity; failure to see consequences of actions
- ❖ Frequent obsession with one topic
- ❖ Distractibility; difficulty concentrating
- ❖ Gullibility; excessive susceptibility to peer-pressure; difficulty making decisions
- ❖ Poor organizational skills; disorganized thinking; frequent confusion over instructions
- ❖ Low tolerance for frustration
- ❖ Excessive variation in mood
- ❖ Difficulty with abstract reasoning; difficulty with concepts of time
- ❖ Difficulty copying models accurately; difficulty discriminating size/shapes
- ❖ Poor peer relationships; poor social judgment
- ❖ Over-excitability during group play
- ❖ Poor short- or long-term memory
- ❖ Lack of preference for right or left hand
- ❖ Poor adjustment to environment
- ❖ Lags in developmental milestones
- ❖ Distorted body image
- ❖ Inappropriate displays of affection

Behaviors that may indicate your student has a learning disability include:

- ❖ Demonstrates marked difficulty in reading, spelling, or using numerical concepts.
- ❖ Has poorly formed handwriting. Has difficulty with certain letters. Spaces words unevenly.
- ❖ Has trouble listening to a lecture and taking notes at the same time.
- ❖ Is easily distracted by background noise or visual stimulation.
- ❖ Has trouble following directions; may need instructions repeated.
- ❖ Exhibits severe difficulty in sticking to simple schedules; repeatedly forgets or loses things.
- ❖ Omits or adds words when reading aloud.
- ❖ Seems disorganized in space. Confuses up and down, right and left; gets lost in buildings.
- ❖ Seems disoriented in time. Is often late or unable to finish assignments in the standard time.
- ❖ Shows excessive anxiety, anger, or depression because of the difficulty in coping.

To help a student living with or left by a chemically dependent guardian:

- ❖ Help your student know she/he is not alone.
- ❖ Help your student develop a healthy personal outlook and deal with her/his feelings.
- ❖ Teach her/him to recognize options when problems arise.
- ❖ Provide alternative ways to respond to life in chemically dependent families.
- ❖ Teach your student to recognize her/his powerlessness over other people's behavior.
- ❖ Teach decision-making skills so she/he recognizes options for coping with stress.
- ❖ Help build self-esteem and increase personal awareness.
- ❖ Build a sense of trust in adults by being a consistent role model.
- ❖ Encourage your student to go to Al-Anon or Alateen — a safe place to share with others in similar situations.

If there seems to be a serious problem with school, ask your student for the school counselor's name and ask your Class Leader for help. Most importantly, for any serious concerns relating to parenting, chemical dependency in the home, abuse or neglect of your student or a sibling, insecure housing, hunger, or any other serious concern, talk privately (outside of your student's presence) with your Class Leader so that a collaborative approach can be taken involving Community Club leadership and potentially outside resources.