

America Reads - Federal Work Study Information

When the America Reads Challenge began in 1997, President Clinton asked the higher education community to take a lead in helping to build a nation of readers. To assist this effort, U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley issued a waiver to the Federal Work-Study (FWS) regulations that allows the Federal Government to pay up to 100% of eligible FWS students' wages if they serve as a tutor to preschool through elementary age children. The America Reads Challenge waiver has since been expanded to include family literacy programs as well as the America Counts initiative.

As of July 1, 2000 every college and university receiving Federal Work-Study funding is required to have a literacy tutoring program and to use seven percent of the funds towards community service. Institutions ensure that one or more of their FWS students is employed as a reading tutor in a preschool, elementary school or in a Family Literacy Program. The wages of the Federal Work-Study students working as reading tutors count towards the seven percent requirement. The America Reads Challenge assists colleges and universities by providing the following services: an updated Web site, recruitment brochures, tutor training materials, an on-line directory, an interactive listserv and electronic Federal Work-Study Updates.

For more information and resources call Tammy Higgins, in the Office of Financial Aid, at 918-540-6235.

America Counts – Federal Work Study Information

Mathematics is a key to opportunity. To stay on track for college and promising careers, today's students must achieve to high academic standards. Unfortunately, many of our nation's young students are not currently performing at this level. While national math test scores are slowly rising, far too many of our students continue to struggle. And, in international assessments, the United States does not compare favorably.

One means of helping students improve their mathematics achievement is to provide them with personal attention and additional learning opportunities through tutoring and mentoring. Caring and dedicated adults can make a difference in young people's lives by helping them build a strong mathematical foundation that will leave the doors of opportunity wide open.

The success and sustainability of math tutoring programs depends on the active involvement of many people. Those with an interest in this effort can, for example, serve as tutors or mentors, help with program coordination, or provide

content or pedagogic guidance as appropriate to their expertise. Get involved today—you can make a difference!

America Counts Tips

The Eisenhower National Clearinghouse--through a contract with the U.S. Department of Education--has highlighted materials suitable for use in mathematics tutoring sessions. They include activities, videos, games, computer software, web sites, and children's literature, and are organized below along grade bands and content strands. To view suggested materials for a particular grade or topic, click your cursor on a cell in the matrix below. While some of these materials will be available at no cost through the Internet, some may need to be purchased (ordering information is provided).

Number Sense includes

- counting, prime numbers, and place value
- computation with whole numbers
- fractions, decimals, and percentage
- money and finance

Algebraic Thinking includes

- patterns, functions, and algebra
- graphing
- proportion and ratio

Geometric Thinking includes

- figures and shapes
- measurement
- perimeter, area, and volume

Statistics includes

- data analysis, statistics, and probability

Problem Solving includes

- Problem Solving and logic and reasoning problems
- Number Sense
- Algebraic Thinking
- Geometric Thinking

Tutors Training Tips

Tutors can play a very important role in a student's academic success. Many of

America's school children can benefit from additional learning time and personal attention. You can help make a difference in a child's life.

- Tutoring can increase mastery of academic skills, raise self-esteem and self-confidence, improve students' attitudes towards school, and provide emotional support and positive role models.
- Tutoring is a collaboration between tutor and student, not a "pouring" of knowledge from one person to another.
- Tutoring sessions should include conceptual learning rather than merely the completion of homework and class assignments.

You're the New-Kid-In-Town...Get Acquainted With Your Tutoring Site:

Although you're eager to begin, you must remember that you are a visitor at your tutoring site and it's important to take some time to familiarize yourself with the staff, students, operations, and rules.

- Introduce yourself to teachers, administrators, and office support staff.
- Read a copy of the school or learning-center handbook if one is available.
- Follow the teacher's classroom rules. Students need consistency with behavioral guidelines. While you can and should have fun with tutoring, it is still work time, and school rules apply.
- Be aware of the resources available to you, such as instructional materials, manipulatives, photocopy privileges, teacher support, etc.
- If you're not sure about something, ASK! Don't assume!

Build Trust and You Can Build a Better Student:

With all of your enthusiasm, it's hard not to want to jump in right away, but taking time to learn more about your student will pay dividends in the end. By establishing a personal, trusting relationship, you can help increase your student's confidence and motivation to learn. Building trust takes time, but you can start by being a reliable figure, and by letting your student know that you understand and respect his/her experiences.

- Spend time getting to know your student and his/her interests. Try to find similarities in your own experiences. If you feel that your student is comfortable opening up to you, you may wish to discuss his/her feelings about school and, in particular, mathematics.
- Maintain regular contact with your student and keep your promises. Consistency is crucial for building trust!
- Have confidence in your student's abilities and make sure he/she knows that you want him/her to succeed. This will help build trust and boost the

student's confidence.

- Situate yourself in a physically non-threatening position.
- Be mindful and respectful of diversity. It is very important not to let differences in race, ethnicity, religion, or income levels interfere with your tutoring relationship.

Getting Down To Business-Rules to Tutor By:

As a reading or mathematics tutor, your responsibilities are great. Through high-quality tutoring you can turn a "can't do" attitude into a "can do" one. Getting students who may usually perform below average excited about their academic achievement is no simple task, but if you follow these basic rules your job as an effective tutor can be made easier.

- Be kind but firm, and establish that you are in charge. You set the tone and expectations for your work together.
- Be patient. Be willing to explain concepts more than once, and in more than one way, if necessary.
- Let your student be an active participant in the learning process; encourage him/her to ask questions and further explore areas of interest.
- Remember that every student learns in a different way and at a different speed. Find a method and pace that is conducive to the student's learning.
- Reassure your student that there is nothing wrong with asking questions or making mistakes-it is part of the learning process.
- Be creative and imaginative with your tutoring methods.
- Do not preach. Your student will be more receptive to a confidant or friend, not to someone whom he/she perceives as judgmental or authoritative.
- In small group tutoring, encourage an atmosphere that is safe enough for even the shyest student to ask questions and respond comfortably. Elicit responses from all members of the group.
- Reduce distractions as much as possible.
- Always plan more for a session than you have time for. It is better to have too much to do than run out of ideas, materials, and activities.
- Try to begin at a level well within the student's grasp to create an atmosphere of success. Do not assume that he/she knows certain fundamentals.
- Introduce and explore material together before having your student work

on problems independently.

- Give clear directions. Break the task into small pieces if necessary.
- Ask questions to stimulate thought, not just to get immediate answers.
- Ask your student to explain his/her work. This will encourage critical thinking and will help you recognize flaws in logic.
- Remember that tutoring should help students improve conceptual understanding as well as skills and symbol manipulation.
- Provide positive feedback and reward your student for hard work and improvement.

Suggestions for Mathematics Tutoring Success:

- Stock your "mathematics-tutoring toolbelt" for every session. You may wish to bring the following supplementary materials, or whatever else may be appropriate, to enhance your instruction:
 - colored pencils, erasers
 - note cards
 - calculator
 - protractor
 - graphing paper
 - enrichment ideas that correspond with content areas
 - book of puzzles, brain teasers
 - journal-make notes of each session and record the student's progress
- Have your student create a personalized notebook to hold all of his/her notes, worksheets, scratch paper, and assessments. Notebooks help keep students organized as well as serve as visual proof of their efforts and progress. They need to see evidence of their progress for encouragement to persist in their work. (Tabs make it easy to find sections and subsections).
 - For elementary-aged students, use stars and stickers to encourage good work and renew efforts.
 - Have students record what they accomplish in every tutoring session.
 - Share student progress with teachers and parents.

- Students must master the fundamentals, or they fake learning and get into trouble when the material becomes more difficult. If your tutee is weak in basic math skills, try using games and activities to help him/her memorize facts. Games make tutoring sessions more lively and interesting for both the tutee and the tutor.