

Supplemental Services

What does NCLB say?

Under No Child Left Behind, low-income parents can get free after-school or weekend tutoring for their children when their school has not met goals for three or more years.

The school or school district must let you know if your children are eligible for this program. They should send you a notice, and this notice should be easy for you to understand. The notice should give you a list of all the accredited tutoring programs near where you live. The programs on this list have to be approved by the state. There should be a description of each program on the list. If you want supplemental services for your child, the school district will make the arrangements at no cost to you (federal funds are used to pay for supplemental services).

If your child does begin a tutoring program, the program must work closely with the school and with you to make sure that it is helping your child

with the specific difficulties he or she is having in school.

Why is this important?

Children who are having a hard time in school need extra help. Schools should provide help, but sometimes that is not enough.

Free tutoring for struggling students in underperforming schools is one way that NCLB focuses extra attention on the students who are not yet proficient in reading and math.

What can I do?

Be very careful in choosing a program for your child. Here are the kinds of questions you should ask before deciding:

- How long has this tutoring program been in business?
- Has the company or tutoring service been successful with students who are behind in school?
- How are the services linked to the school curriculum? Is the tutoring focused on strengthening basic skills in math and/or reading?
- What does the provider do to coordinate their efforts with the students' teachers? With their schools? Is there a plan to share information throughout the tutoring?
- How will the provider explain to you what your child's problems are? (It is not helpful to say that a student is having trouble reading—that is already known. They should tell you why your child is having trouble reading, and where the problem is coming from.)
- What does the provider do that is different from how the student was taught in school?
- Will you be able to follow the progress of your child through regular progress reports?
- What feedback/progress reports will you receive? How often?
- What can you do if you are not satisfied? Who can you talk to?