

## Shaneil the FFC Tutor

The young children I have tutored over the years all have beautiful and inquiring minds and I enjoy every moment with them. On the contrary, my students may not enjoy every moment when frustration and defeat consumes them. As their tutor and to some even their mentor, it strikes me to see them so downcast just because they are confused. My one rule is that no student will leave my session until they feel confident in the topic I'm assisting them in. It may seem a bit strict, but the end results are very rewarding for me and my kids.

As they leave with their parent with a smile of triumph on their face, I can't help but feel the same warmth I know my students are feeling. A student myself, I have first-hand experience of the difficulties of grasping a topic when I am discouraged. Therefore, I know how rewarding it is to conquer that difficult battle and feel a certain pride in myself that is incomparable to anything in this world. My job is to tutor children, but my calling is to help them feel worthy in all areas.

Therefore, besides teaching them their academic material, I also try to instill in them values that they can't learn inside a classroom, like identifying and appreciating their self-worth and not allowing confusion to let them feel less of themselves.

Although I am the tutor, my kids have taught me a lot as well. I remember when I first started to tutor; my first student was a little Hispanic boy who was about six years old. He was small, but that little boy was definitely a handful. Looking back, his mom even warned me about his hyperactivity, but I was too excited to worry. I was helping him with his reading, which at first I thought would be a piece of cake, but after fifteen minutes, I thought otherwise. His eyes wandered everywhere, he touched everything his little hands could reach, and he even got up from time to time to look at the bookshelf.

Gradually becoming on edge, I had to take five minutes and reason. Those five minutes changed my whole perspective for the rest of my life. In that small amount of time, I told myself that if I wanted the child to learn, I would have to get down to his level. I transformed from THE tutor to his friend, and naturally he came to me. We got through the material we were supposed to do, and although I was tired, I felt really proud of him and myself.

When his mom came, he grabbed his supplies and hugged me. That hug was the best reward any tutor could ask for. Since that day, I have continued to be a friend to my students because I know that we connect better that way. My children have taught me patience and flexibility and these are two traits that can get me far in life.

**Shaneil Wedderburn**  
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