



PEN Notes: Fact Sheet #22

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Learning Styles and Your Child

People learn in different ways. The way a person prefers to learn is called his/her learning style. There is no right or wrong, good or bad learning style. Some learn best by seeing, others by hearing, and still others by touching. By understanding learning styles, parents and teachers can better grasp how each child's brain learns best. Learning styles have nothing to do with intelligence; they have everything to do with the way a child's brain works to learn and store information.

(Source: University of Illinois Extension)

Learning is reflected in the way we respond to environmental, social, emotional, and physical stimulation. Learning style includes the way that information is handled and sorted out. *It focuses on strengths, not weaknesses.*

The Way They Learn



Once different learning styles are understood, parents can become far more effective in helping children grasp confusing concepts, stay interested in lessons, and utilize their strengths.

Each person is so complex and unique that one learning style can not fully describe who a person is. We can recognize and identify patterns of behavior and communication that will become keys for appreciating style differences. Learning style or intelligence is really just a description of how a child learns. One child learns a

concept best with a hands-on approach while the next child can grasp the concept by analyzing a mathematical formula. A third child learns the mathematical concept by using music. Each child approaches the problem in a different way to arrive at the same conclusion.

Source: Tobias, *The Way They Learn*, Tyndale, 1994.

What is a Learning Style?

A learning style is the way a person acquires knowledge. Not "what" a person learns, but "how" a person learns. Seven different learning styles or intelligences have been identified.

Linguistic/Verbal Learners relate to language in both its written and spoken form. They learn best through poetry and stories.

Logical/Mathematical Learners focus on different types of reasoning and logic. They like to make observations and draw conclusions.

Spatial/Artistic Learners like to deal with visualization and imagery. Children with this learning style learn well through painting and drawing.

Intrapersonal Learners focus on situations that require them to reflect upon themselves. They like higher-order thinking and reasoning.

Interpersonal Learners engage in verbal and nonverbal communication with others. They like working cooperatively in groups.

Bodily/Kinesthetic Learners like physical movement. They learn well when involved in physical exercise, like dance, drama or role play.

Musical Learners have the capacity to recognize rhythm and tone patterns.

A child's brain is always developing. The strengths and weaknesses a child shows when she's five may be quite different from her strengths and weaknesses when she's ten or fourteen. The way children—all children—learn changes over time.

Learning to love to study.

We can learn to use our children's learning styles to help them concentrate and learn. The standard approach to doing homework is to insist upon a consistent time each evening, provide a clean, quiet, well-lit room with desk and chair. For many children, as well as adults, this is an effective way to concentrate. For others, however, it is like being imprisoned without possibility of parole.

At any age, a child will learn more easily using his/her preferred learning style, but this doesn't mean he can't and won't learn any other way. In fact, a child should be encouraged to use and improve *all* modes of learning.

A good guideline is to allow your child to use his preferred style when learning essential information (material for a test) and to practice using other learning styles for things that are not as important (words to songs you sing in the car). (Source: Canadian Child Care Federation.)



Your child may have several different learning styles. While he may prefer one learning style, it is important that you still provide a variety of activities. In that way, you continue to develop other aspects of your child's personality.

Source: The Newsletter Connection