



Tips on Determining Your Child's Learning Style

Think for a minute about how your child learns. Many parents focus on what their child learns in school, but sometimes they need to ask, what is our child's learning style?

Learning styles are linked to one or more of our senses, according to Andrea Pastorok, education psychologist, Kumon Math & Reading Centers. Generally speaking, each of us can be put in one of four categories of learning: Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic and Tactile.

- The **Visual Learner** learns best when she is “shown” how to do something. She thrives on written directions.
- The **Auditory Learner** retains more information from what he hears than reads.
- The **Kinesthetic Learner** expresses herself through movement and often has trouble sitting still.
- The **Tactile Learner** needs to feel and manipulate objects and needs hands-on experience in order to learn best.

“It is important to realize that successful learning happens when we make a connection between what we are attempting to learn, and our personal strengths,” says Pastorok. “When the connection is made, learning is easy. When it isn't, difficulty follows and students have trouble paying attention, completing assignments or taking tests.” If you know your child's strongest learning style, share this information with their teacher.

To help your child at home, parents can use individual techniques for the different learning styles. For example, if your child is having trouble preparing for a spelling test, here are some tips that might help:

- A **visual learner** can write and re-write the spelling list, so she can see how the letters look when they come together on the page.
- An **auditory learner** can make an audio recording of himself spelling out the words on the list so he can replay them and spell along with the tape.
- A **kinesthetic learner** can use her body to form the letters, can put the words on objects or can recite the spelling of words while jumping rope.

- A **tactile learner** can use magnetic letters to spell out the words on his refrigerator or form the letters in clay or sand.

It is in a child's best interest for parents to understand how they learn best. Although most of us use a blend of learning styles, we usually rely more heavily on one style than the others. Sometimes what may look like a learning disability, may really be a learning difference.

Kumon Math and Reading Centers recognizes this, offering, for instance an oral reading component to the Reading Program and math manipulatives such as the number board in the Math Program. For more information, visit www.kumon.com.

Note to Editors: Dr. Andrea Pastorok is available for interviews.

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