

Understanding Your Child's Learning Style

Tip – Understanding your child's learning style (and your own) will prepare you to face the issues that arise when selecting a school or teacher for your child.

There are three basic styles of learning: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic.

Most of us have a combination of these styles, with a distinct preference in one area.

"Knowing about all three styles," says educator and counselor Dr. Linda Budd, author of *Living with the Active Alert*

Child: Groundbreaking Strategies for Parents, "will enable you to help your child strengthen skills in the areas she does not naturally favor, so that she gains other pathways to information."

Our society is generally biased in favor of the visual learner, but it's important to remember that one style is no better than another. When you know about learning styles, you can help your child understand why some things come more easily to her than others.

- **Kinesthetic.** All children begin as kinesthetic learners. They learn by doing, by touching, by direct involvement in life. Some children begin to prefer another style by the time they reach school age, others remain kinesthetic in their preferences. These children prefer action stories, take a lot of breaks from reading or writing in order to change body position, gesture with their hands when they speak, always have their hands up during group time, and fidget when they must sit still.



- **Auditory.** These children learn best through listening--taking in information and instructions. Auditory learners enjoy conversations and may have difficulty waiting their turn to talk. They love to read dialogue, but avoid long descriptions of scenery. These children hum and sing to themselves, and tend to make a lot of different sounds. They solve problems by talking them out or through.
- **Visual.** These children learn by seeing--by watching a demonstration or reading directions. They often learn to read by recognizing words by sight. Appearance and order are important to them. They often think in pictures or detailed images. Visual learners are deliberate, like to make plans, and often jot notes to themselves.

When you are selecting a teacher or program for your child, take into account his learning style. For instance, if your son learns best kinesthetically, ask yourself, "Does my child's teacher arrange the environment so that my kinesthetic learner can move? Are there active, manipulative learning tools such as cards, beads, or movable alphabet letters in the classroom?" Similarly, if your daughter is an auditory learner, you might choose a phonics-based reading program for her.



Dr. Budd also recommends that parents identify their own learning style. This helps them deliberately reach and help their child through styles other than their own.

You'll find more practical tips you can use right now in *Living with the Active Alert Child: Groundbreaking Strategies for Parents* by Linda Budd, Ph.D.