

Teaching and Learning

Learning styles



Learning styles are a concept in psychology and education and are intended to identify how children learn best. The VAK model of learning styles suggests that there are 3 main types of learners: visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic.

Adapting activities to a child's learning style, enables children to grasp the learning much more quickly because you are presenting the information in a way that a child is predisposed to understand.

It is important to observe this in children and be able to plan our provision, environment, activities, and routines around the child's needs.

Visual Learners

Visual learners observe their world around them. They find it easier to learn by seeing. To understand a concept, a visual learner finds it easier to learn through charts, diagrams, pictures, and videos. To remember information, they need to see it represented in pictures and objects.

Indicators

- A vivid imagination
- An interest in art: painting, drawing, or crafts
- A strong memory that relays visually-observed information
- A good sense of direction and an understanding of maps
- An aptitude in reading and a love of books
- Recognition of people, faces, and places
- A keen interest in observing the world around her
- Observes rather than talking or acting
- Not very distractible
- Notices details
- Memorizes by seeing graphics or pictures
- Enjoys advance planning
- Struggles with verbal instructions
- Typically has good handwriting and is a good speller
- Tend to be artistic and have vivid imaginations – they like to form their own images in their minds when reading or listening in order to stay engaged with the content
- Prefer to use shapes, textures, and objects to present an idea
- Notice the body language of those around them, sometimes more than the words

Auditory Learners

Auditory learning is a learning style in which a child learns through listening. Auditory learners need to hear what is being said in order to understand.

Indicators

- Aptitude in music, instruments, or vocal ability
- A tendency to sing along to songs or to create her own songs as she plays
- Strong verbal ability, especially through repetition of words or phrases she's heard before
- Ability to listen well and follow verbal directions
- A love for talking and discussions
- Sharp ability to notice sounds that others don't recognize
- Perking up when she hears music or dialogue
- Talks to self
- Easily distracted
- Enjoys music, hums or sings often
- Enjoys being read to or listening to audio books
- Struggles with written instructions
- Likes to talk
- Like to contribute orally in class
- Enjoy talking with people and seem very social
- Pay close attention to sounds other than the spoken word (background noises, auditory cues, etc.)
- Prefer to hear directions as opposed to following a map

Kinaesthetic Learners

Kinaesthetic Learning is a learning style in which a child absorbs information through touch, movement, and motion. To understand a concept, a kinaesthetic learner needs to be able to touch it, feel it or move it around.

Indicators

- Aptitude in sports, dance, or other physical activities
- A tendency to fidget while in her seat — she may need to move while processing information
- Frequent use of gestures when speaking or explaining things
- A love of hands-on activities and play-acting
- Enjoyment of writing, drawing, or handwriting exercises
- Early physical development, such as walking, crawling, or sitting early
- Sharp hand-eye coordination
- Frequently in motion- shaking legs, drumming fingers, etc.
- Often touches people while talking
- Enjoys solving problems by physically working through them
- Will try new things, is very outgoing
- Reading and spelling, not a priority
- Love building sets, model kits and interactive displays

Task

Use the list above to observe children in your setting to identify some of the learning styles of your children. Can you already describe the learning style of your children?

Did you get any surprises?

Once identified, use the list below to support you in embedding strategies in your setting to support those individual children needs.

Visual teaching strategies-

- Seat your visual learners close to the front, where they can see the presenter clearly
- Include meaningful visual aids to support your verbal instruction
- Use colours to cue important information
- Designate an area for craft supplies. Visual learners tend to like art and creating.
- Make eye contact with the children when speaking. Visual learners are drawn into body language.
- Describe colours, sizes, and shapes when giving tasks to children who are visual learners. They will use these clues to follow-through on the information.
- Use images, graphs etc. when introducing concepts etc.

Auditory teaching strategies-

- Seat auditory learners away from distractions
- Use good expression when speaking- don't be monotonous!
- Have students repeat important information
- Incorporate songs or catchy phrases into your presentation
- Give the child a quiet space so he can read aloud or talk to himself.
- Find opportunities for your child to express himself verbally and listen to others do the same.
- Encourage children to teach others how to do things. Expressing instructions orally is usually a task auditory learners excel at.
- Have various types of music available for your child to listen to each day. It helps to stimulate their learning.

Kinaesthetic teaching strategies-

- Seat children towards the back of the room so their motion does not distract others
- Have frequent movement breaks
- Incorporate role play into your discussions
- Offer kinesthetic learner things to hold in their hands.
- Give kinesthetic learners textured paper to write on and a variety of different sized pencils and pens to choose between.
- Physical math manipulatives, such as pattern blocks and base ten blocks, can help kinesthetic learners internalise a new math concept, for example.