

*Every day, we believe in the power to succeed and shine.*

To succeed and shine, we need awareness of our own gifts and strengths, and the opportunity and courage to nurture and 'grow' these talents. But, one of the key ingredients here is...LEARNING.

## **WHAT IS LEARNING?**

In technical terms, 'learning' is: "the acquisition of knowledge or skills through study, experience, or being taught." It goes without saying that the scope and spectrum for learning are wide, varied, and both limitless and limited. Where we, as individuals, fall on that spectrum and our unique scope for learning will be dependent on a huge number of variables, including: our capacity for learning, desire to learn, and our opportunity to learn.



## **WHAT ABOUT THE WAY WE LEARN?**

For the purpose of this feature, we are going to look at three main ways in which an individual can/will learn: VISUAL; AUDITORY; KINESTHETIC. (Reading and writing are sometimes classed as a separate method of learning, but we are going to group these under the umbrella of: VISUAL LEARNING). We will all fall more strongly in one of these categories, and this will be largely due to the way we ingest, retain, understand and process incoming information. None of them are better or worse than the others. And none of them will lead to the learning of better or worse knowledge/skills...just different.

## ARE CHILDREN THE SAME?

The short answer is: yes. Children will also, generally, fall into one of the three Learning Styles. This means that they will acquire knowledge and skills more easily if they learn them in a visual way, an auditory way or a kinesthetic way. Each child will have a preferred learning mode which will allow them to learn in the best way for them.



## A MORE IN-DEPTH LOOK AT THE LEARNING STYLES

**Visual:** Children who have a Visual Style of learning:

- These children will be able to process information that they can SEE much more effectively than information they can hear.
- They are likely to remember information which is presented in the form of graphics, and they may be able to use graphs, charts, maps and/or diagrams effectively.
- They will find it easier to follow instructions/directions if they SEE a visual demonstration first.
- These children will benefit from being able to SEE the information being taught.
- They may find mind-maps helpful, especially when colour and pictures are used, instead of text.
- They may be observant but can miss what was said and their thoughts may wander.
- They probably like to read and may be good at spelling.

- They may be able to concentrate well.
- These children can be very organised.
- They probably won't enjoy doing oral presentations or speaking in public.
- **THE READERS/WRITERS:** These children will learn information best if they **READ** and **WRITE** it down. They are likely to benefit from reading a text book and making notes, and perhaps reading over their notes and copying them out again. They definitely prefer to learn through words.

**Auditory:** Children who have an Auditory Style of learning:

- These children learn best when **HEARING** and actively **LISTENING**.
- They will understand and remember things they have **HEARD** as they store information by the way it sounds.
- It will be easier for these children to understand **SPOKEN** instructions than written ones.
- Making notes directly from a book will not be an effective way of learning for these children.
- These children may prefer to ingest information through audio clips, video clips, music or by discussing a topic.
- They can indicate emotion through the tone, pitch and volume of the voices they are listening to.
- These children will enjoy listening but will be itching to get a chance to talk!
- You may find that these children give long, repetitive descriptions.
- They will probably enjoy listening to themselves and others talk, and may like to join in with group discussions.
- These children may benefit from having a 'study-friend'.
- They may also prefer to record information they need/want to learn, and may even want to record themselves.

**Kinesthetic:** Children who have a Kinesthetic (Tactile) Style of learning:

- These children will learn to the best of their abilities when it is combined with **PHYSICAL** action.
- They may find it harder to learn when listening to instructions or watching visual demonstrations.
- They will learn the best when they are being **PHYSICALLY** active and/or **PHYSICALLY** engaged.
- They may also learn well when activities require **ACTIVE, PHYSICAL** involvement.

- Because of their style of learning, traditional classroom settings may not suit them.
- These children may be especially good at PHYSICAL activities such as: running, dancing and/or other sports.
- You may find that they are very coordinated and have a good sense of their own bodies in terms of the space around them, and body timing.
- They may also have good hand-eye coordination and quick reactions.
- These children may struggle with listening, and may lose interest in long discussions.
- You may find that they stand very close to the person they are speaking with or listening to, and may gesture a lot.
- They may like to try things out – to TOUCH, FEEL and manipulate objects.
- Children who are kinesthetic learners will benefit from being able to take breaks and MOVE around during periods of learning.
- They may also find it easier to learn something new, and store it in their memory if they are STANDING or MOVING whilst doing so.
- These children will learn more easily if they are MOVING, TOUCHING and PHYSICALLY interacting with whatever it is they are learning.



## WHEN CAN PROBLEMS OCCUR?

Problems can occur when a child and those around them are unaware of that child's learning style. The adults around them may try to teach them using methods that do not match that child's style. The child may then struggle to learn to the best of their ability. But, this may be mistakenly interpreted as an inability to learn, full-stop. Furthermore, the location and environment for learning may not match a child's learning style. Not every child will be able to sit still at a desk/table and learn in a 'traditional classroom' way. This, of course, may have a knock-on effect on the child's self-confidence, feelings of failure and their overall enjoyment of learning.

## HOW CAN WE HELP CHILDREN EXPLORE AND UNDERSTAND THEIR OWN LEARNING STYLE?

Take time to explore and discover your child's learning style through a series of creative, innovative tasks. And don't forget to let them choose the location/learning set-up – even if they want to do it hanging upside down on the sofa! It may tell you a lot about their style. Here's our first suggestion:

### MEMORY GAME 🧠

STEP 1: Show 8-15 different objects to your child, for them to remember (either the actual objects or photos of them). You can ask your child to write them down. Your child can then have a few minutes to study their list. Then show the objects/photos to them again but with one missing. Ask them if they know which one is no longer there. (Testing Visual Learning style). 👁️

STEP 2: Read out a list of 8-15 different objects for your child to remember. Discuss the objects. You will then read the list out again, but with one of the objects missing. Ask your child if they know which one has not been read out. (Testing Auditory Learning style). 🗣️

STEP 3: Place 8-15 different objects in a room or in the garden (but these must be objects that can be handled, used, or manipulated in some way, such as: a football, a phone, a hairbrush). Then ask your child to move around the room/garden and pick-up/use all the objects in turn. Ask your child to leave the room/garden, remove one of the objects, and then ask them to repeat the exercise. Then, ask your child if they know which one is no longer there. (Testing Kinesthetic Learning style). 🙌

STEP 4: Think about which of the methods your child found the easiest.

Here's our second suggestion for how to discover your child's learning style: 😊

### LOOK AND LEARN 👁️

STEP 1: Make yourself a cup of tea. ☕

STEP 2: Choose a simple, daily-living task that your child is not able to do yet, such as tying shoe laces; using a can opener; peeling a vegetable; using a kettle safely; using different clothing fasteners etc. 🥕 👟

STEP 3: Ask your child which task they would like to learn, and then give them a choice of: watching a demonstration; listening to audio instructions; or doing it together with you, physically. 👁️ 👂 👤

STEP 4: Carry out the task in their preferred way, but pay close attention to and observe the journey they take. 👁️

STEP 5: Pay attention to: 1) how they cope with making a mistake; 2) whether or not they ask you to repeat the instruction in a different format; 3) whether or not they ask you to repeat the instructions in the same format; 4) their reaction to success. ⚡

However you choose to test your child's learning style, it will be a much more enjoyable activity if it is done using a subject/game that your child is interested in. 👍

Have a discussion about, write down or show your child which learning style you think they have. And definitely ask for their thoughts/opinions, too. 👤

Teach your child how to express themselves in learning situations that they are struggling with, so that they know how to communicate to those around them what their learning style is, and how they need the information to be presented.

If a child has the space and freedom to explore their learning style through interesting means, using their own likes/talents/passions, their love of learning will be ignited. They will then have more confidence to tackle the subjects they are not so interested in. 😊

## **Finding Your Animal Learning Power**

### **The wonderful world of animals!!**

This activity has been created to help children explore, understand and embrace their own learning style even more. It is to be used alongside the activities previously suggested, to further support this amazing journey of discovery.

The question is, does your child have:

- **SPECIAL BABY CHIMP POWERS? (Visual Learning Style)**
- **SPECIAL BAT POWERS? (Auditory Learning Style)**
- **SPECIAL BEE POWERS? (Kinesthetic Learning Style)**

### **LET'S EXPLORE THIS FURTHER...**

If you already know your child's learning style, please feel free to use only the relevant section below. If you're still not sure, then why not look through all three with your child.

**We want your child to see their learning style as a SUPER-POWER!**

### **SPECIAL BABY CHIMP POWERS (Visual Learning Style)**



It's time to help your child find out if they have special baby chimp powers and is a visual learner. Below is some information about the way baby chimps learn. If you know your child is a visual learner, you can best support this by finding an on-line video for your child to watch – specifically about young chimps learning skills and knowledge from adult chimps. If you're still not sure about their style, you may also need to: watch a video with good auditory commentary and then

have a discussion about the way baby chimps learn, OR; watch a video and then try to copy some of the amazing skills of chimpanzees through physical activities. Can you crack a nut open using a stone? Or go fishing for honey with a stick?

**BABY CHIMP POWER:** Baby chimps sometimes use a Visual Learning Style. They learn all of their skills by watching their Mum. Through visual demonstrations, she will teach her baby which plants they can and can't eat. Some are poisonous so this is a vital skill! The baby chimp learns best by observing what their Mother eats and then copying her actions. Young chimps will also learn which plants are used for medicinal purposes by watching which plants its Mum eats when she's poorly. Chimps have very good memories! They will also learn how to make and use tools by watching how it's done. For example, chimps use sticks as a sort of 'fishing pole' which they poke into holes to collect, for example, ants and honey. They have also learnt how to crack nuts by placing the nut on a large, flat rock, in a slight indent so that it doesn't roll away. They will then select another, smaller stone and use that to crack open the nut. These baby chimps really know how to use their Visual Learning Style!

### **SPECIAL BAT POWERS (Auditory Learning Style)**



It's time to help your child find out if they have special bat powers and is an auditory learner. Below is some information about the way bats learn. If you know your child is an auditory learner, you can best support this by finding an on-line video with good auditory commentary, specifically about the ways bats learn (echolocation), and then have a discussion about it. If you're still not sure about their style, you may also need to: watch an on-line video about the way bats learn, OR; watch a video and then try to copy some of the amazing skills of bats through physical activities. Perhaps you could ask your child to try and

navigate your house/garden whilst blindfold, to find certain objects, but using only the noises they are making. Or, ask them to identify certain objects from their sound only.

**BAT POWER:** Bats sometimes use an Auditory Learning Style. More than half of all bat species communicate using high-pitched sounds through their mouths and noses. Some will even click their tongues. Can you do this? They use these noises to find a partner or food, or to find a space to sleep. Clever! They use different sounds for friends and for those they don't know. Have you heard of 'Echolocation'? This is when the bat makes a sound, and that sound then bounces back off an object or prey. Have you ever heard the echo of your own voice? It's a bit like that. A bat can learn about the distance and location of an object or prey using Echolocation. What a clever use of Auditory Learning!

### **SPECIAL BEE POWERS (Kinesthetic Learning Style)**



It's time to help your child find out if they have special bee powers and is a kinesthetic learner. Below is some information about the way bees learn. If you know your child is a kinesthetic learner, you can best support this by finding an on-line video, specifically about the way bees use the 'waggle dance' to learn, and then have a go yourselves! Can you direct each other to where an object is by 'dancing' the directions?! If you're still not sure of their style, you may also need to: watch an on-line video about the way bees use the 'waggle dance' to learn, OR; watch an on-line video with good auditory commentary and then have a discussion about the 'waggle dance'.

**BEE POWER:** Bees sometimes use a Kinesthetic Learning Style. When a worker bee finds some food: pollen or nectar, they go back to the hive to perform a 'WAGGLE DANCE'! The worker bee shakes her abdomen from side to side, dances

for a certain amount of time, and faces her body in a particular direction. This waggle dance 'tells' the other bees at the hive which direction the food is in and how far away it is. How clever is that?? The other bees follow the worker bees around as they perform their waggle-dance so they can learn all this information about the food. If the food is close though, the worker bees don't waggle – they move in a circle and perform a ROUND DANCE. What an amazing use of Kinesthetic Learning!

**We hope you have had loads of fun learning all about your learning style!**

**Hmmm...we wonder which one you are.**

