



# Did You Know...?

# # 37

## About Learning Styles and Your Child

*Parents Reaching Out connects with families, schools and communities in New Mexico. We offer information from many reliable sources. We thank the Parent Education Network, a project of Parents Helping Parents of Wyoming, Inc. for permitting us to share their PEN Notes publications in this information series.*

Three kids in the same family: One studies on the floor with papers strewn everywhere, another lies on the bed with the radio blaring, and the third sits at the dinner table with cookies in hand! It is enough to drive a parent crazy, but it does show how each child seems to have a particular bent. A child's natural "bent" helps answer the questions: How did they all come from the same family? And, why are they so different?

### What is a bent?

A bent is an inclination, intelligence or strength that a child has. One seems drawn to art or creative activities while another can listen to music or play sports for hours on end. Finding your child's natural bent will help you guide her into endeavors that she will love for life. A person's intelligence can also be described as a learning style.

### 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 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 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.

## Learning to love to study.

We can learn to use our children’s choices of environmental preferences to help them concentrate and learn. The standard approach 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 some, it is tantamount to being imprisoned without possibility of parole. Instead of insisting on a particular place for your child to study, try watching what position your child uses most often when engrossed in a book or other favorite task. By placing the emphasis on the environment that the child loves, the studying will become an extension of what they enjoy and find pleasure in.



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

*“Did You Know...?” fact sheets are developed by Parents Reaching Out in collaboration with the New Mexico Public Education Department under a grant from the US Department of Education Office of Innovation and Improvement. Views expressed do not necessarily represent the policy of the US Department of Education and should not be assumed to be an endorsement by the Federal Government.*