

Parent & Teacher

RESOURCE GUIDE



Your Child's Learning Style

There are well over 70 different learning styles, according to Vanderbilt University, and an entire industry has grown up around helping people identify and understand how they learn best. Most of these learning styles are based on three main categories, according to the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency: visual, auditory and tactile.

Many people learn using a combination of these styles, but knowing which style is most effective for your child can help you maximize their learning at home and at school.

PHEAA offers a 20-question quiz to help visitors to their website understand their learning style. The result is a breakdown by percentage for how well you are likely to learn using each style. For example, visual: 50%, auditory: 30%, tactile: 20%.

WHAT EACH STYLE MEANS

Understanding each learning style is the first step to understanding how to put the information to work for students.

Visual: Visual learners tend to learn by reading or seeing pictures, according to PHEAA. They remember information by creating mental pictures of the information.

Auditory: Auditory learners learn and remember information best by hearing and speaking. They prefer spoken directions to written ones and enjoy reading out loud.

Tactile: Tactile learners learn and recall information through touching and physical activity. These “hands-on” learners like to use their hands to build, move, touch and create.

WHY IT MATTERS



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Once you know your child's learning style, you might be able to suggest methods he can use at school to best learn and retain information. Keep in mind that the time and resource constraints in the classroom might prevent your child from being able to implement some strategies all the time, but keeping them in mind and using them when

possible can help students hone their learning and studying habits.

PHEAA offers the following tips for each style of learning:

Visual

- Sit near the front of the classroom.
- Have your eyesight checked on a regular basis.
- Use flashcards to learn new

words.

- Try to visualize things that you hear or things that are read to you.

- Write down key words, ideas, or instructions.

- Draw pictures to help explain new concepts and then explain the pictures.

- Color code things.

- Avoid distractions during study times.

Auditory

- Sit where you can hear.
- Have your hearing checked on a regular basis.
- Use flashcards to learn new words; read them out loud.
- Read stories, assignments, or directions out loud.
- Record yourself spelling words and then listen to the recording.
- Have test questions read to you out loud.
- Study new material by reading it out loud.

Tactile

- Participate in activities that involve touching, building, moving, or drawing.
- Do lots of hands-on activities like completing art projects, taking walks, or acting out stories.
- It's OK to chew gum, walk around, or rock in a chair while reading or studying.
- Use flashcards and arrange them in groups to show relationships between ideas.
- Trace words with your finger to learn spelling (finger spelling).
- Take frequent breaks during reading or studying periods (frequent, but not long).
- It's OK to tap a pencil, shake your foot, or hold on to something while learning.
- Use a computer to reinforce learning through the sense of touch.

Teaching Math Skills

Whether preparing your child for school, supporting their formal education at home or finding resources for your classroom, there are seemingly endless resources for math learning.

At each stage of development, there are certain aspects math you should focus on. The U.S. Department of Education website offers the following activities parents and teachers can use to help children learn to love math. (Find more at Ed.gov.)

PRESCHOOL

Before children start school, the focus should be on helping them understand what numbers are, what they represent and how they are used.

The following activity provided at Ed.gov, uses math to help children understand that numbers can represent objects:

Five Little Speckled Frogs

Five little speckled frogs
(hold up five fingers)
Sitting on a speckled log
(sit on your heels)
Eating some most delicious bugs
(pretend to eat)
Yum! Yum!
One jumped into the pool
(jump)
Where it was nice and cool
(cross arms over chest and shiver)
Now there are four little speckled frogs.
(hold up four fingers)
Burr-ump!
(Continue until no frogs are left.)
After saying the rhyme, ask your child to hold up the correct number of



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fingers to show how many frogs are in the rhyme at the beginning. Then have her hold up the correct number of fingers and count to five with you as you say each numeral.

Teach your child any counting rhymes and songs that were your personal favorites when you were a child, or have your child ask her grandparents what rhymes they knew when they were children. Other counting rhymes, songs and games that you may want to teach your child include “One, Two, Buckle My Shoe,” “This Old Man,” “Ten in a Bed (Roll Over)” and “One for the Money.”

KINDERGARTEN-GRADE 1

This fun game uses money

to teach kids about the value of numbers.

Penny, Nickel, Dime

What you need:

Die
Pennies, nickels, dimes

What to do:

Have each player roll the die and say the number. Then give the player that number of pennies. Explain that each penny is worth one cent.

When a player gets five pennies, replace the pennies with a nickel. Explain that five pennies have the same value as one nickel—that is, five cents. When she gets five more pennies, replace the pennies and the nickel with a dime. Help her to see that the value of five pennies plus

the value of a nickel (five cents) equals 10 cents, which is the value of a dime.

The first player to reach a set amount—25 or 50 cents, for example—wins.

GRADES 3-5

Shapes teach us a lot about numbers. This activity teaches early geometry.

Simply Symmetrical

What you need:

Shapes such as a circle, a square and a rectangle, cut from heavy paper
Sheets of paper (rectangular)
Pencil, marker or crayon
Magazine pictures of symmetrical objects

Safety scissors

Glue

What to do:

As your child watches, show her the square that you’ve made. Fold it in half and show her that the two parts are exactly alike—or symmetrical. Do the same with the circle and the rectangle. Then give the shapes to your child and ask her to make the folds herself. Extend the activity by having her do the following:

Find as many ways as she can to fold half of the square onto the other half. (There are four ways: two diagonals and two lines “down the middle”).

Do the same for the rectangle. (There are only two ways: down the middle of the long side, then down the middle of the short side. In going from a square to a rectangle, the diagonals are lost as lines of symmetry.)

Do the same with the circle. (Circles can fold along any diameter. Use this discovery to introduce your child to the word “diameter”—the length of a straight line that passes through the center of a circle).

Ask her to find the center of a circle by folding it in half twice. (She’ll discover that any diameter-line of folding in half-passes through the center of the circle, an activity that will prepare her for understanding more complicated geometry later on.)

Show your child a rectangular piece of paper. Ask her, “What shape will you get if you fold this piece of paper in half?” Have her fold the paper, then ask, “Did you get a square or another rectangle?” Using scissors to cut the paper, show her that a rectangle will fold to a square only if it is twice as long as it is wide.

Your Local Library

Your local library can play a large role in your child's education if you use everything it has to offer. Libraries can be a place to get homework help, find a quiet place to study, take fun classes, attend cultural events and socialize with peers. Encourage students to use everything your local library has to offer.

PRESCHOOL AND SUMMER READING PROGRAMS

Many a child's first exposure to the library is through preschool story time. Usually offered in the mornings on weekdays, story time is a great way to encourage your child to learn about and use her local library from an early age. Any exposure to reading increases a child's chances of high reading achievement.

Even when school is out, learning can continue. Summer reading programs offered by libraries are a great way to combat summer learning loss. Often these programs provide prizes after children read a certain pre-determined number of books or pages and include larger prizes for contest or raffle winners.

TECHNOLOGY

According to ExpandingLearning.org, technology can draw children to libraries. Rather than spending their computer time playing games that might not encourage learning, at libraries, children have access to the guidance of a librarian, who can provide fun, educational ways for children to use technology. Some libraries loan out iPads loaded with educational apps, or wifi hotspots to take the learning along on vacation.



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Many libraries also have access to e-readers or digital materials, such as digital books that might offer interactive experiences such as music and narration.

CLASSES AND EVENTS

Check your local library's website or printed catalog for

the latest course and event offerings. The list of possible activities is endless: book clubs, fun events such as animal encounters, Lego robotics, crafts, cultural and holiday events, gaming, music, coding, movies and more. There are myriad ways to learn and discover new things

at your local library.

STUDY ROOMS AND TUTORING

Most libraries offer rooms that can be used free of charge for students to study on their own or with a group, or even to conduct meetings of small organizations. Check with

your local library to find out how to schedule, as study spaces are sometimes in high demand and must be reserved ahead of time. Some libraries even offer standing times when tutors are available to help students with homework, test prep or learning to use technology.



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Honing Study Skills

Even the brightest student can struggle in school without a crucial set of study skills to help develop good studying habits, cope with stress and anxiety and demonstrate what he knows.

These skills start in elementary school, with tasks as simple as writing down each and every assignment in a planner and making a checklist of materials to take home at the end of the day. As students get older, their study skills will need to evolve to meet new demands, all the way into their college years. Be mindful of the importance of study skills to help your students do their best.

TYPES OF STUDY SKILLS

There are many different types of study skills. Three main categories include time management skills, organizational skills and test taking skills.

Time management. Managing one's time is a skill that will become more

important each year, as the load of homework and projects gets larger. Students need to learn to make decisions about how they spend their time, whether it's chatting with friends, spending time with family and getting schoolwork done. Each use of time, of course, is worthwhile, but deciding how to prioritize each one can be challenging.

Organizational skills. Organizing oneself and materials is a skill that will be useful for a lifetime. Help students understand that having their materials and assignments in the right place at the right time is crucial to success. One strategy is to write down assignments in a daily planner through the day, make a note of which

materials will be needed, and set aside time at the end of the day to gather those materials and check them off the list. This takes practice and repetition. Another strategy is to write due dates on each assignment and put all the materials into a certain folder and into the backpack throughout the day.

Test-taking skills. Testing can be nerve-racking to say the least. There are many ways for students to feel more at ease, from being sufficiently prepared to arriving early and having all the required materials to pacing oneself and knowing what to do when an problem is challenging. For each type of test (multiple choice, matching, fill in the blank, etc.), there are

specific strategies students can learn to help increase their scores.

STRESS AND ANXIETY

It's important to reassure students that it is OK to feel stressed or anxious while studying and talk openly with children about the fact that many students face the same challenges they are facing. Share stories from your own life about similar challenges you have faced or others' stories about successfully overcoming similar challenges. You might consider having your student read a book about overcoming adversity or seeking outside help from a therapist. Sometimes anxiety about studying can be a symptom of a larger mental health problem.

Reading Apps

The time children spend reading directly correlates to their academic achievement. Give students the best opportunity to succeed by encouraging them to read — whether it's a good old-fashioned book or via new-fangled technology.

Children love technology, so it makes sense that reading on a screen would appeal to them. If you're looking for ways to spark students' interest in reading, apps are a great place to start.

LOCAL LIBRARY

Your first stop should be your local library. Your library card is the key not just to thousands and thousands of books but a potentially larger library of digital titles. Check with your library to see which apps you can access through your library card. Some apps allow unlimited numbers of digital titles to be accessed at one time, while others limit digital checkouts in the same way as physical books. Digital books, especially those for children, often offer extra features, such as music and read-alongs.

E-READING APPS

From Kindle to iBooks to Google Play Books, you can find many of your children's favorite titles on e-reading apps that let them take a digital library wherever they go. Before road trips and vacations, stock up your kids' devices with downloaded titles for an educational alternative to watching movie after mindless movie on the go.



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OTHER APPS

Bookster: This app includes pre-recorded narration by children and gives children the ability to record themselves reading.

TouchyBooks: In this multilingual app, digital titles are accompanied by sounds, animation, a flip-book-like experience.

MeeGenius: This app lets

kids substitute their name for a character in the book. It also includes the ability to highlight words to review them later and a read-aloud feature.

Bob Books Reading Magic 1

& 2 and Sight Words apps: Engage with classic Bob Books in color with the Reading Magic apps. The Sight Words app lets kids practice 30 sight words and includes 4 games.

Supports Arts Education

Art education benefits students not just in their knowledge of art but in many other subjects, as well. Art education requirements are set by each state, however, and while many states require a certain number of hours or minutes of art education per year, some states have no requirements at all.

What can you do to support art education? A lot. The following tips from Americans for the Arts are intended to help parents and educators inspire a love of art in students.

1. Participate. Sing, play music, read a book, dance, or draw with your child at home.

2. Support. Encourage your child to participate in creative outlets and celebrate their participation in arts activities both in their school and the community.

3. Go read. Visit your local library and read “the classics” together — from Mother Goose to Walt Whitman.

4. Speak up. Attend a school board or PTA meeting and voice your support for adequately funded arts education programs as part of the school’s budget. Brush up on the facts about arts education beforehand.

5. Take the lead. Tell your child’s teacher or principal about how vital the arts are to quality education. Ask them what they need and how you can help.

6. Think local. Read your local newspaper or community website to find out about local cultural events for you and your child to enjoy.

7. Volunteer. Donate time, supplies, or other resources to your child’s school or a local arts organization’s education



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programs.

8. Join the cause. Join our Cause campaign called “Keep the Arts in Public Schools.” It’s

free!

9. Be an advocate. Show your support for arts education by speaking with education

leaders and decision makers.

For ways to take action, visit Americans for the Arts’ website.

10. Stay informed. Keep up

to date on the latest arts education news by subscribing to the RSS Feed on ARTSblog at www.americansforthearts.org.

Preparing for College

Preparing your child to attend college is a lot like preparing him for life. He will need skills such as organizational skills, money management, time management and social skills. It's really never too early to start teaching these skills at home and at school.

Here are some critical lessons student need in order to gain valuable life skills.

Allow them to fail. Failure happens. It's important that your child has the emotional fortitude to get back on her feet after failing. The only way to learn this skill is through experience. Yes, it's hard to let our kids fail. But it is absolutely necessary. Winston Churchill said, "Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts." This wisdom will serve your student well.

Teach them how to find the resources they need.

According to Psychology Today, this might mean just plain saying "no" when your student asks for homework help. Every college campus has resources available to students who are struggling with their studies. From an early age, resist the urge to do everything for your child. Teach them how to find and use the resources they need to solve their problems.

Teach them about mental health. Students will face stress, anxiety, bullying and disappointment. They need to learn how to cope with these challenges. Talk openly to your child about the importance of mental health and the fact that there is absolutely nothing wrong with asking



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for help. Make sure they know about counseling services offered on campus, as well as suicide prevention hotlines. It is crucial to speak about mental health without presenting bias or stigmatizing mental health issues.

Teach them about money. College can be a crash course in what not to do in regards to

personal finance. Encourage your children to use their allowance or income from a part-time job wisely. Teach them about budgeting and investing. When they are away at college, they will face temptation to overspend and sign up for credit cards. Making sure they have a solid foundation in financial edu-

cation is critical to preventing mistakes that can follow them for a lifetime.

Teach them about time management. College presents a seemingly endless barrage of events, social gatherings and obligations. Make sure your child has experience in managing their own schedule and knows how to

leave themselves enough time to study and socialize.

Teach them about safety. College students face many safety issues, including binge drinking, sexual assault and theft of personal property. Be sure your child knows how to get help in an emergency and how to avoid dangerous situations.