



Beverly H. Rohman



*HELP FOR PARENTS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO STRUGGLE
WITH AD/HD OR OTHER LEARNING DIFFERENCES*

Know Your Child's Learning Needs

What is a learning style?

Learning style refers to the highly individualized way we take in (or perceive), process, and organize information. *How* we learn is just as important to the learning process as *what* we learn. Just having the awareness of how you or your child interacts with the world is powerful. Did you know that some people can't effectively memorize words unless they spell each one out loud first? Or, that when some students (and adults) incessantly tap a finger or pencil it actually helps them to stay on task? Does your child's teacher or your spouse or employer know these things? Sharing this information with teachers, co-workers and family can be invaluable to learning and understanding individual differences and needs.

There are four basic learning styles:

Visual Learners: work best when they see, watch, read or view

These learners need to see body language and facial expressions to fully understand. They may think in pictures and learn best from visual displays – diagrams, videos, handouts, illustrated books. Visual learners often prefer to take detailed notes to absorb the information.

Auditory Learners: work best when they hear, speak, discuss and think out loud

They learn best through verbal lectures, discussions, talking things through and listening to what others have to say. Auditory learners interpret the underlying meaning of speech through listening to tone of voice, pitch, speed and other nuances. Written information may have little meaning until it is heard. These learners often benefit from reading text aloud and using a tape recorder.

Kinesthetic / Tactile Learners: work best when they can move, touch, feel and do

The hands-on approach, and actively exploring the physical world around them, is the best way that tactile/kinesthetic persons learn. They may find it hard to sit still for long periods and may become distracted by their need for activity and exploration.

Even though we use all available senses to absorb information, some senses are more dominant than others. Because each person is so complex and unique, no one learning style model can fully describe what a person is and how he learns. Each bit of information is another piece of the puzzle. Identifying and understanding individual learning styles is an ongoing journey. It is important to: **Observe** patterns of behavior. What are the circumstances that bring about success? **Listen** to a way a child or adult communicates. When teaching, training or parenting, **experiment** with what works and what doesn't. Keep an open mind and remember that even if an approach to leaning does not make sense to you, it may work for the other person. **Focus** on natural strengths, not weaknesses. Strengths provide a much better foundation. **Learn** more about learning styles in general. What we must guard against is insist that each person fit neatly into a category. *We do not all learn the same way.*

My child's IEP (Individualized Education Program) isn't up for review until the end of the school year, but I feel like a few changes need to be made now. Can I request an IEP meeting in the middle of the school year?

Absolutely!!, says Kellie Knopp, LD specialist. If you feel additional problems are arising or some of the original goals need to be reviewed, you have the right to request an IEP meeting at any time. If a meeting is not scheduled with-in 10 days or a reasonable amount of time, you should send a written request to your child's advisor or to the appropriate school contact.

The Learning Connections of Easton offers consulting and coaching services for individuals who have AD/HD or other learning differences. The Learning Connections offers a monthly support group at the Nick Rajacich Health Education Center in the Easton Memorial Hospital. Bring your questions or concerns and we will provide information, offer resources, show videos, have guest speakers and discuss tips for managing these personal and family challenges. For more information about The Learning Connections or our support group, call 410-763-7097.

Send your questions to *ASK TLC*, 101 Bay Street, Suite 6, Easton, MD 21601, or write to info@thelearningconnections.net and look for answers in our upcoming columns.

Beverly Rohman is the Executive Director and founder of The Learning Connections LLC as well as an AD/HD Coach and Learning Consultant.

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