

# Tips for a successful school year

Whether it's the beginning of the school year or well into the semester, sometimes helping a child succeed academically means understanding how he or she learns best.

Experts say children's individual learning styles are linked to one or more of their senses and can generally be classified in one of four categories: visual, auditory, kinesthetic or tactile. Knowing the group in which your child falls can help him or her overcome scholastic obstacles and, in many cases, move to the head of the class.

"Successful learning happens when we make a connection between what we are attempting to learn and our personal strengths," says Dr. Mary Mokris, an education specialist for Kumon Math and Reading Centres. "When the connection is made, learning is easy. When it isn't, difficulty follows." She offers these tips for identifying your child's learning style:

### Seeing Is Believing

Visual learners learn best when "shown" how to do something. They thrive on written directions. If your child is a visual learner, it could be best for him or her to write and rewrite a spelling list he or she is studying to see the letters come together on the page.

### All Ears

Auditory learners retain more information from what they hear than read. Auditory learners can make an audio recording of themselves spelling out words on a spelling list so they can replay them and spell along with the tape.

### Move On

Kinesthetic learners express themselves through movement and often have



trouble sitting still. To learn a spelling list, a kinesthetic learner can use his or her body to form the letters, can put the words on objects or can recite the spelling of words while jumping rope.

### Feeling Smart

Tactile learners need to feel and manipulate objects with hands-on experience in order to learn best. They can use magnetic letters to spell out spelling words on the refrigerator or form the letters in clay or sand.

"If you know your child's strongest learning style, share this information with the teacher," says Dr. Mokris. "That can help them adapt certain lessons appropriately."

For instance, at Kumon Math and Reading Centres, instructors offer an oral reading component to the reading program and math manipulatives such as the number board in the math program. The program currently helps more than 4 million children in 45 countries. More information is available online at [www.kumon.com](http://www.kumon.com).

—News Canada

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