

## **KVA - how children learn**

***'If the child is not learning the way you are teaching, then teach in the way the child learns.'***

***Rita Dunn***

When you talk to a group of children to give them information only around a third will learn the information to use again. This is because only a third of people take in information primarily through their ears.

After the age of around four, children will take in the majority of information through three of their senses – **Visual** (through their eyes), **Auditory** (through their ears) and **Kinaesthetic** (through touch). Everyone tends to have a preference of one or two of these learning styles.

Children who prefer Auditory learning usually do quite well in the school system; teacher talk is still the most prevalent form of imparting information. Children who prefer Visual learning also do quite well, particularly in primary school. Kinaesthetic learners tend to miss out the most.

Kinaesthetic learning encompasses more than just a sense of touch. It includes a need to move and to be touched emotionally. All the children that are fidgeting, bouncing footballs and constantly jumping around are not doing it to be naughty. They **NEED** to move in order to learn. They are doing their best to do what they are meant to do, but unfortunately they get labeled 'badly behaved' and miss out on opportunities to show their ability. They thrive in a practical programme that takes account of their need to 'feel' what they are learning.

Please note that we are not talking of people being 'Visuals' or 'Kinaesthetic Learners'. It is not about giving children another label. What is important is that we realise how children 'naturally' like to learn.

The way we like to learn then often becomes the way we like to teach, and even when we know about the differences, it's still our default style when we are busy, rushed or under pressure.

It is not to be suggested that teachers come up with individualised learning programmes for all, nor that you do absolutely everything in three styles all of the time. The ideal would be multi-sensory – it would help everyone learn more easily – but at least make sure that in any given session you have given more or less equal consideration to all three kinds of learning.

When trying to input new information, you want lots of external sensory stimulation. When asking children to access their own internal imagery for creative work, they will need to reduce the external stimulation (noise, movement around them). Describe things with lots of sensory description, ask them to close their eyes and notice how much they remember when they do this!