

Junior Secondary Guidance Officer

How Parents Can Build Learning Strengths



Every child's brain is as unique as their fingerprint. This gives them their own pattern of learning strengths. When parents and children know this pattern they can more powerfully engage in learning and discover pathways to success. Parents don't need to be teachers or experts in brain functions. Learning strengths increase parents existing knowledge and capacity to inspire their children about future possibilities. Learning Strengths is based on the

latest research from neuroscience and gives parents a way of increasing their children's motivation and passion for learning.

How you can discover about learning strengths

Go to www.mylearningstrengths.com and complete the analysis. Begin by completing the analysis for yourself. You will be emailed a free letter outlining your top learning strengths and suggestions about how to use these to increase learning in other areas. Knowing your own learning strength profile will help you to see how to help your child towards success. Once you have an understanding of your own learning strengths, ask your child to complete the analysis and discuss the letter with them. For children younger than Year 4 you may need to do it with them. For very young children you could complete it on their behalf and treat the results as a rough guide as they develop and mature. You can repeat the analysis as many times as you like but generally once every six months will be most useful.

How does knowing learning strengths help me to help my child?

There are a number of ways this knowledge benefits your child:

- Overcoming a fear of 'failure'- Success in life is not about being good at everything. Success is about discovering what you are good at, developing those strengths and applying them to other areas where possible. Some children believe that unless they are good at everything, they are not smart or successful. If this belief persists they lose motivation, fear making mistakes and avoid learning. A child whose parent knows how to help them discover their learning strengths and how to use them to build success in other areas is much more likely to remain confident and motivated.
- Awareness- Knowing your learning strengths and your child's patterns assists you to consider similarities and differences between you both. Not every child shares the same strengths as their parent. Valuing strengths your child has, that you do not share, is a voyage of discovery for most parents.
- *Planning activities*-Parents are powerful teachers of their children. By focusing on activities that your child already has learning strengths in, you are likely to get greater engagement and enjoyment.



Extending activities to develop learning– Learning strengths start with what is strong to improve what is not yet strong. For example, if your child has a learning strength in perceptual-motor areas (sport, dance, craft, construction) and you wanted to improve their strengths in number smarts, you might find ways to discuss how numbers play a role in those areas. Concepts like arcs, trajectories, sports statistics, percentages, right angles and number sequences all become more meaningful when we relate them to something a child is already good at. At home a child who has concentration and memory learning strengths but is yet to develop planning and sequencing strengths may struggle to clean up their room. A parent could help them by using what they are already strong at (concentration and memory) by turning room cleaning into a memory game i.e. 'what we need to do next?' This will make learning a new sequence easier.

- Pursuing passions- There is a strong overlap between our learning strengths and what we are interested in. A child's learning strengths may change as they mature but in the long-term, knowing about learning strengths helps young people choose the courses or careers that suit them and where they are most likely to experience success. Finding a career path that calls upon your learning strengths is a pathway to having a satisfying life. Children knowing their learning strengths goes some way towards increasing the likelihood that they may be able to provide you with some support in your more senior years.

More information

- Andrew's website: www.mylearningstrengths.com has helped over 11,000 young people in the past year discover their learning strengths.
- Book for Parents: *Unlocking Your Child's Genius* Book for Teachers *Neurodevelopmental Differentiation- Optimising Brain Systems To Maximise Learning* (Hawker-Brownlow).
- [Andrew Fuller](#) is a clinical psychologist and author. He is also chairperson and a frequent speaker at Generation Next seminars, and a contributor of writing about youth resilience, learning and many other topics, including in [our handbooks](#).