

When Learning is a Challenge

We were created for a unique purpose

No two brains are alike. As Dr. Mel Levine, M.D. so aptly conveys in his book, *A Mind at a Time*, some minds were wired to create symphonies, while others were designed to build bridges, or computers, or drive trucks, or find cures for cancer. **Acknowledging that God created us with unique wirings, it is imperative that we respect and nurture our children's minds with the utmost care.**

Instead, some children pay a huge price for having a brain that is not wired as others expect it to be. **Those that somehow do not meet the demands of correct spelling, reading quickly, or remembering math facts fast enough to suit a standardized test are often taunted instead of having their weaknesses addressed and their strengths cultivated.** In truth, some minds are just not wired to think in ways academics present material. **Sometimes the challenge of learning has to do with the way it is presented.** In adulthood, these same children will be able to practice their specialty if they don't give way to discouragement, but as children they will be ruthlessly evaluated and compared. What a gift it is to find a parent or teacher who will hand these dear ones courage and innovative tools for learning.

Learning has three stages

Sometimes the challenge of learning is more complicated than simply the brain's wiring. **Learning is essentially the assimilation, categorization, and use of information.** It takes place in three stages- receiving information, processing information, and expressing information. We receive information through our senses. **Auditory, Visual, Visual/Motor (writing), Focus attention, and Expression are the main learning channels.** Properly processed, the information is then stored, remembered, and retrieved. We often evaluate a person's ability to receive and process information by how well they are able to express what they have learned. **If there is a breakdown (or even a glitch) in any of these three stages or a block to one or more learning channels, it becomes a struggle to learn.**

A child or teen who is working harder than his peers has a glitch

This child has to work hard at things that should not take so much energy to learn or remember generally because one or more of the learning channels are blocked. The children who learn easily seem "smart" because they don't have any major blocks in their information pathways. When we speak of a blocked learning channel, we mean that the child continues to need to concentrate on the processing task because processing skill has not transferred into the automatic brain hemisphere. – But there are strategies to "detour" the blocked channel and create a new pathway once the issue is uncovered!

The first step in helping a struggling learner is to **put together an accurate neurodevelopment profile- as accurate as a detailed photograph** (Genetic factors, temperament, peer influence, physical health, educational experience, cultural values, family factors, and environmental issues) plus the current state of his grades weighed against his academic skills and knowledge. **Search for highly specific strengths and weaknesses, which might not be obvious.** To do so, you must become a student of your child. Studying the reoccurring patterns you observe will give clues to his brain's wiring and blocks.

It is also a good idea to have a thorough physical exam

Remember, learning is not all in your head. You were created to learn with your whole body-your senses. Blood work should be drawn to discover allergies and vitamin and mineral deficiencies. Beginning an appropriate and balanced diet to accommodate results, proper hydration, and essential fatty acids will help brain function considerably. With these adjustments alone, you will notice a change!

Check hearing-and auditory processing, vision- and tracking, as well as language skills to be sure they are developmentally on target. If the doctor suspects a problem in any of those areas, he may refer you to a local specialist. He should have information on the child's stage of development versus the norm.

Every child *can learn* if given the right tools -focusing on his strengths & wiring.

Unlocking the mystery of your child's *LEARNING* could be a piece to your Parenting Puzzle!

To learn about parent coaching or for more training on this topic,
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