

The Daily Parent

A NEWSLETTER FOR WORKING PARENTS

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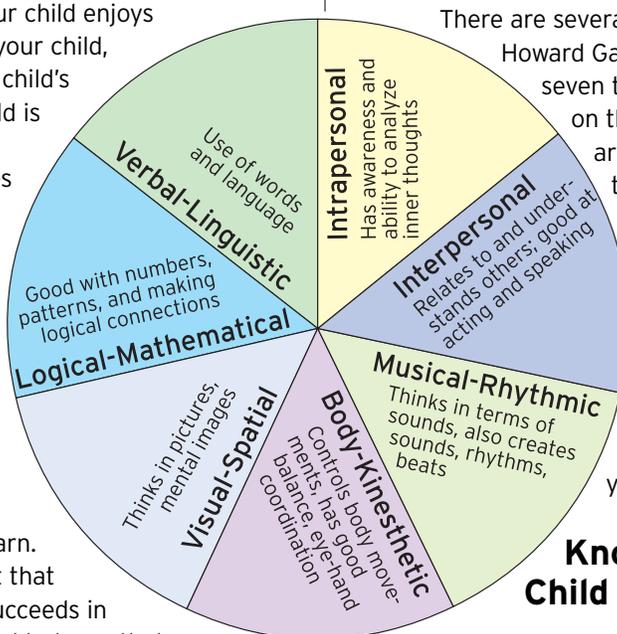
DIFFERENT KINDS OF "SMARTS": Supporting Children's Intelligence Styles

As your child grows from being a baby to toddler to preschooler you notice what most interests your child, what types of toys your child likes, and what kinds of activities your child enjoys most. As you get to know your child, you are also learning your child's abilities and what your child is good at doing. Most likely these activities and abilities will be good indicators of your child's "intelligence type."

The main ways children's intelligence and abilities are judged in our school systems are through their language and math skills. These are very important skills all children should learn. As a parent, it is important that your child does well and succeeds in school. However, it is helpful to know that there are *many* ways to show intellectual ability. Not everyone is "book smart." Multiple intelligences* are a set of different ways to look at how children (and all people) are smart and skillful. Understanding that children can be intelligent and good at different things allows you to help your child learn and succeed by seeing the world through her eyes. It can help you understand how she best shows what she

knows and can do.

More Than One Way to Be Smart



There are several types of intelligence.

Howard Gardner has come up with seven to nine types. We will focus on the first seven (the other two are called naturalist and spiritual intelligence). According to the theory, all people have intelligence in all of these areas.

Consider the seven types of intelligence depicted in the pie chart to the left and determine the ones in which your child is strongest.

Knowing *How* Your Child is Smart is Helpful

So how does knowing the types of intelligence help you with your child? It can help you to provide the types of activities and experiences at home that will help your child to learn and express himself in a way that is most natural to him.

Even so, children need to be exposed to a variety of

*Multiple Intelligences is a concept and approach developed in 1983 by Dr. Howard Gardner. Gardner says there are at least seven different ways to show intellectual ability. His findings expand the idea of intelligence or the way that people think, problem-solve, and understand beyond the measure of typical intelligence tests (IQ). IQ tests heavily depend on verbal and logical/mathematical ability. Schools typically rely heavily on verbal and mathematical ability as well. His work has helped educators reach children in other ways to help them develop to their full potentials.

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experiences and be allowed to participate in many kinds of learning and activities. Knowing your child's intelligence type does not mean you ignore other skills and abilities. For example, even though your child may not be very coordinated or able to play soccer well, it does not mean you should not allow your child to participate. Also, if your child's strength does not happen to be in the language or math area, it does not mean your child cannot learn to read or learn to add. All children need to learn to read, use language, and do math computations. It just means that using your children's strengths can help them learn to read and do math easier.

TYPES, ABILITIES, SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES

Type	Skills	Support You Can Give
Visual-Spatial	Doing puzzles, reading, writing, drawing, visual arts, having a good sense of direction, designing objects, fixing things	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give your child plenty of materials to able to draw, write, paint • Start with puzzles with fewer pieces, and as child gets older, have puzzles with more pieces <p><u>For school-age children:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce to graphic arts • Try mazes
Verbal-Linguistic	Speaking, storytelling, writing, listening, using humor, remembering information, using language cleverly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide lots of books and reading materials. Read stories together. • Give child materials to write. Have her make a book and read it to you when she is old enough. <p><u>For school-age children</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get them enrolled in learning another language • Play word, board or card games
Logical-Mathematical	Problem solving, categorizing and classifying, working with geometric shapes,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give your child building toys • Play matching games • Have your child look for objects at home and put them into categories: all red objects, all round shapes <p><u>For school-age children</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give them games that involve logic and numbers
Bodily-Kinesthetic	Dancing, sports, acting, anything requiring physical coordination, creating with hands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make music a daily part of their activities, have free time to dance and move • Act out stories with dance only • Allow your child to try different kinds of sporting activities <p><u>For school-age children</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enroll child in team sport she likes

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Children do not begin to show a strong intelligence type until after age 2. But it doesn't matter what age your child is, you can support his learning by allowing him to participate in a variety of activities and experiences. As your child gets older, his most outstanding skills will become clearer.

By being aware of your child's type or preferred way of learning, you can work with his child care providers and teachers to ensure teaching methods that reflect your child's type of abilities.

As a parent, the best way to support your child in school is to be prepared and have as much informa-

tion to share about your child as possible. Every child has their own gifts. Once you know what your child's gifts are you can talk with your child's teachers and say, "this is *how* my child is smart."

For More Information

- **Concept to Classroom**, a series of workshops, www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/mi/index.html features a series of FREE, self-paced workshops covering a wide variety of hot topics in education. These workshops include plenty of tips and strategies for making classrooms work. They can help you to see how classrooms and other places of

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Type	Skills	Support You Can Give
Musical-Rhythmic	Singing, playing musical instruments, composing music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play music around the house • Introduce your young to basic musical sounds and instruments: bells, drumming <p><u>For school-age children</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let them learn to play a musical instrument or take formal music or dance lessons
Interpersonal	Able to see other's point of view, listening, able to pick up on cues from others, good at forming good relations with other people, conflict resolution; good leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure your child has lots of interactions with other children • For older children, encourage your child to participate in group activities, take a leadership role <p><u>For school-age children</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enroll in groups such as Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts, or other team-building groups
Intrapersonal	Figuring out their own strengths and weaknesses, analyzing, understanding themselves and how they relate to others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow your child to take time to think before making choices, when possible. • Allow your child to be quiet and reflective • If your child is hesitant or shy, don't force the issue <p><u>For school-age children</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have your school-ager keep a journal – activities, thoughts, whatever he would like • Find independent projects your child can work on



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learning can put the concept of multiple intelligences in their programs. They have several videostreams that you can watch to see multiple intelligences used in real-life situations with children to help their learning.

- **Family TLC**, www.familytlc.net has tools to enhance the parent/child relationship with a variety of activities you can do with your child, organized by age and activity categories. These activities support all areas of intelligence.
- **For research and background of multiple intelligence theory**, see website of Dr. Howard Gardner, www.howardgardner.com. Website has frequently asked questions about multiple intelligence, books Dr. Gardner has written, as well as current research he is involved in. (The original book on multiple intelligence theory is entitled, *Frames of Mind*, published in 1983.)



- **PBS Parents, Child Development Tracker**, www.pbs.org/parents/childdevelopment, is a tool for parents with age-by-age snapshots considered by child development experts to be “widely-held expectations” for what an average child might achieve within a given year. Use it to consider them in the context of your child’s unique development and what kinds of activities you may want to try with your child in exploring their various intelligence types.

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