
Getting to Know Your Learner

A reflective guide for parents starting out in home education
You know your child. This helps you understand them as a learner.

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You know your child better than anyone. But knowing your child as a person and understanding how they learn best are two slightly different things — and figuring out the second is one of the most valuable things you'll do in your first term of home education.

There are no right answers here. Fill this in at the start, and revisit it after a few months. You'll be surprised how much your answers change.

THE BASICS

Child's name

Age / year group

Why are we home educating?

eg. school refusal, SEN, anxiety, bullying, family choice...

ENERGY & RHYTHM

When are they most ready to learn?

eg. mid-morning, after lunch...

When are they least available?

eg. first thing, late afternoon...

How much structure do they seem to need?

- Lots — they like knowing what's coming
- Some — a loose shape to the day
- Very little — they follow their own rhythm
- Not sure yet — still figuring it out

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HOW THEY LEARN

How do they take in information best? *(tick all that apply)*

- Reading / being read to Watching / video Doing / hands-on Listening / audio Talking it through
- Writing it down

How do they work best?

- With me there, guiding them Independently, with check-ins In short bursts with movement breaks
- For longer stretches when engaged

WHAT LIGHTS THEM UP

What are they genuinely interested in right now?

Don't filter for 'educational' — all interests are valid starting points

What have they always been good at, or proud of?

Subjects they enjoyed at school? Subjects they struggled with?

Enjoyed:

Struggled with:

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WHAT SHUTS THEM DOWN

What triggers stress, anxiety or shutdown for this child?

eg. time pressure, being watched, loud environments, too many choices...

What does it look like when they're overwhelmed?

Knowing the signs early means you can step in before it escalates

SENSORY & PHYSICAL NEEDS

Do they have any sensory sensitivities? *(tick all that apply)*

- Sound / noise Clothing / textures Light Smell Movement / stillness None identified

WHAT THEY NEED FROM ME

What kind of support do they respond best to?

eg. encouragement, space, clear instructions, lots of check-ins, humour...

What have I found makes things worse, even when well-intentioned?

eg. pushing too hard, hovering, comparing to siblings or school peers...

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LOOKING FORWARD

What does success look like for this child at the end of their first term?

Not academically — what would make you both feel good about how it's gone?

One thing I want them to feel about learning by the end of this year:

One thing I want to feel about home education by the end of this year:

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COME BACK TO THIS

This worksheet is most useful when you revisit it. What you think now will change — and that's a good thing. Set a reminder to come back to this after your first term and notice how your answers have shifted.

First term reflection — fill this in after term one

What surprised me most about how my child learns:

What I got wrong in my original answers — and what I know now:

What I'd tell another parent who is where I was at the start:

What kind of learner are they?

Learning styles describe how people tend to take in and process new information most effectively. Most learners use all three to some degree — but knowing which tends to dominate can make a real difference to which resources you reach for first.

STYLE 01

Visual

Visual learners process information best through what they can see. Diagrams, written text, charts, demonstrations and colour-coding all help information stick. They often think in pictures and benefit from seeing concepts laid out spatially.

WORKS WELL WITH

- Textbooks, worksheets, written notes
- Diagrams, mind maps, timelines
- Colour-coding and highlighting
- Watching demonstrations before trying
- Visual schedules and written instructions

STYLE 02

Auditory

Auditory learners absorb information most effectively through listening and speaking. Explanation, discussion, reading aloud and listening back to recordings work far better than silent reading alone. They often process by talking — even to themselves.

WORKS WELL WITH

- Audiobooks, podcasts, video explanations
- Talking through problems out loud
- Reading aloud together
- Narrating what they've learned
- Discussion-led lessons

STYLE 03

Kinesthetic

Kinesthetic (or tactile) learners learn through doing, moving and touching. Hands-on activities, experiments, building and physical interaction with materials help concepts land in a way that sitting and reading alone doesn't.

WORKS WELL WITH

- Experiments, building, crafting
- Acting things out or role-play
- Movement breaks between tasks
- Learning through real-world contexts
- Short bursts with activity between

IDENTIFY YOUR LEARNER'S STYLE — OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Tick any statements that feel true for your child. Which column fills up fastest? That's probably their dominant style — though most learners are a mix of two or all three.

VISUAL (V)

- Remembers faces but forgets names
- Drawn to books, diagrams and maps
- Doodles while thinking or listening
- Notices when things are out of place
- Prefers written over verbal instructions
- Uses visual language: "I see what you mean"

AUDITORY (A)

- Remembers conversations clearly
- Talks through problems out loud
- Easily distracted by background noise
- Enjoys podcasts, audiobooks, radio
- Reads lips or watches speakers' faces
- Hums or taps while thinking

KINESTHETIC (K)

- Fidgets or needs to move during lessons
- Learns best by doing, not watching
- Touches things — picks things up
- Finds long sit-down sessions hard
- Remembers what they did, not what they read
- Enjoys experiments, cooking, building

V TOTAL

A TOTAL

K TOTAL

MY LEARNER'S DOMINANT STYLE(S)

A note on the research

The VAK model is a widely used practical tool for observing how children learn. Current research suggests most people use all three styles, and that the real skill is in matching teaching methods to the task and the child — not fixing them to a single label. Use this as a starting point, not a diagnosis. Dominant styles also shift as children grow, particularly through adolescence. Revisit this page alongside the rest of the guide.