

kinesthetic kids

Diagnosing a learning style, not ADHD

As the music slowed, my heartbeat quickened. Circle time was here, which meant that every baby must sit quietly on her mother's lap. I sunk to my knees, Julianne's legs kick-boxing me in the stomach, vehemently protesting her place in the circle. Her whimpers suddenly gave way to a piercing scream, encouraging the other babies to follow suit, drowning out the soft guitar. Cheeks hot and flushed with shame, I swiftly carried my squirming bundle out of the room. This was hardly a way to bond.

Circle time is a long-revered tradition in most early childhood programs, but for a kinesthetic learner like Julianne, it can be a disastrous experience. From birth on, these children are physically active and have difficulty when asked to sit still. They learn by touching, running, riding, climbing;



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**DEFY
DIABETES**
LAST IN A SERIES

*Final words on a
disease with few
if no boundaries*

This is the final installment in our yearlong series dedicated to helping families defy diabetes, a disease that some are now referring to not only as an epidemic, but as an imminent human catastrophe. Unlike illnesses such as the devastating flu or West Nile virus, which are sweeping the country, type 2 diabetes is, in large part, preventable by simply exercising more and eating less. Without question, obesity is the biggest risk factor in developing the disease. And yet we eat more and favor sedentary activities such as TV, computers and cell phones.

Much is being done in the way of education and research to quell the burgeoning tidal wave of type 2 diagnoses. Recent findings include the following:

Abdominal fat can quadruple your risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Those with what is often referred to as a "beer belly" or "apple-shape" are told that waist measurement is more important than weight in determining risk. This announcement came at the recent National Obesity Forum.

A New Zealand study that followed 41 overweight adults found that high-dose vitamin E temporarily improved the subjects' insulin resistance. Note: The amount of vitamin E ingested was many times

the recommended dose. It was also noted that those subjects with a high intake of antioxidants also experienced improved insulin usage. Stress can cause high levels of cortisol (the stress hormone), which in turn raises blood sugar levels. Relaxation techniques are said to keep blood sugar levels in check during stressful times. Reference Richard Surwit's "The Mind-Body Diabetes Revolution" for more information.

Consumption of red meat may be a risk factor, as reported in Diabetes Care. In the Women's Health Study, more than 37,000 women were followed for more than eight years. Those women ages 45 and older with a high intake of red meat and related cholesterol and animal proteins were found to have greater risk of type 2 diabetes.

A study of more than 50,000 American nurses has revealed that those who drank just one soda per day had an 80% greater risk of developing type 2 diabetes than those who consumed just one soda per month.

Bottom line, the odds of you and your family developing type 2 diabetes can be lessened. Take a look at your risk factors; obesity, poor diet, and lack of exercise. Make the necessary changes to put the odds of avoiding the disease in your favor.

To access our Defy Diabetes initiative, visit www.ocfamily.com.

— By Kimberly A. Porrazzo

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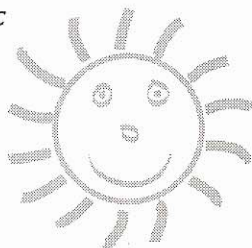
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imprinting muscle memories into their bodies. A recent learning styles survey by Diablo Valley College determined that roughly 18% of our population learns better in a kinesthetic fashion. Unfortunately, most education is geared toward the use of auditory or visual senses, encouraging children to sit still and listen. And often, the kinesthetic child's psychological need for movement may be labeled misbehavior.

Understanding if you have a kinesthetic learner is especially important now that ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) statistics are on the rise. According to the National Resource Center on ADHD, approximately 3-7% of children ages 6-11 suffer from ADHD. However, Ricki Linksman, author of "How to Learn Anything Quickly," says that when she evaluates children who are diagnosed with ADHD, many are simply, "kinesthetic learners that need to engage in gross motor (large muscle) activity to learn best. Once they are given the opportunity to learn through the proper methods, their ADHD-like behavior often disappears." She goes on to say that today's students are often given an automatic diagnosis of ADHD and routinely put on Ritalin without considering alternative factors.

Recognizing the difference between the neurobehavioral disorder of ADHD and a kinesthetic learning style can be an important step for educators and parents.

Parents can determine if they have a kinesthetic learner by taking a learning styles test, available both on the Internet and in books. Kinesthetic children often display these characteristics:

- Wiggle, tap their feet, or move their legs when they sit
- Strong sense of balance and eye-hand coordination
- Use hands while talking and enjoy handling objects
- Outgoing by nature; express emotion through physical means
- Are moving most of the time
- Like physical rewards

If your child has a kinesthetic learning style, it is important to find a good learning environment that fosters self-esteem and confidence. Whether your child is in a Mommy and Me class or an elementary school, you must be your child's best advocate. Visit the schools and talk to the teachers before you make the decision to enroll. Find an educator who understands that kinesthetic learning style is paramount in your child's development and education.

Eileen Green, an expert who lectures for schools on learning modalities, encourages preschool teachers to interact with students by singing, dancing and doing finger plays, instead of sitting still in a circle. "A kinesthetic child will willingly become part of a circle if she can make it a personal and meaningful experience." At Mission Viejo Montessori School, kindergarten teacher, Farah Acierto uses hands-on materials such as sandpaper, boards and tablets to teach rough and smooth and rods for each child to build in horizontal lengths to stretch their arms long or hold short ones in their hands, engaging eye and hand coordination.

RESOURCES:

BOOKS

"How to Maximize Your Child's Learning Ability," by Dr. Lauren Bradway, Barbara Albers Hill (Square One Publishers, 2003, \$14.95) This book helps parents to assess their child's learning style and develop skills to strengthen and enhance their social and academic abilities.

"The Way They Learn," by Cynthia Tobias (Focus on the Family Publishing, 1998, \$11.99) A learning styles expert gives parents and teachers approaches to maximize success in school.

"Talkers, Watchers, and Doers: Unlocking Your Child's Unique Learning Style," by Cheri Fuller (Pinon Press, 2004, \$11.99) This book guides parents to create a specific learning environment with individual study skills so the child may learn and grow.

"Every Child Can Succeed: Making the Most of Your Child's Learning Style," by Cynthia Ulrich Tobias (Focus on the Family Publishing, 1999, \$10.99) Tobias gives parents practical tools so their children can learn in their own unique style and live up to their potential.

INTERNET

These sites will provide the basic information on learning styles, including diagnostic tests, assessments and useful aids. www.howtolearn.com, www.ldpride.net, www.familyeducation.com

As a parent, you can help your kinesthetic learner achieve success with these aids.

- Use hands-on experience when possible
- Practice by repeated motion
- Use rhythm to memorize
- Write on surfaces with a finger
- Stretch/move in chair
- Exaggerate lip movements in front of a mirror

Our last attempt at Mommy and Me found us in circle time again with a teacher who held an adorable stuffed dog on her lap. As she quietly read "Goodnight Moon," Julianne expertly maneuvered out of my arms, crawled to the center of the circle, snatched the dog and shoved him into every face in the circle to kiss. This time, there was a consequence. The unforgiving teacher sent us both outside the classroom to a "timeout" chair. Humiliated, we abandoned the class and drove home.

In her kindergarten class, Ms. Acierto doesn't use the word timeout. "When their bodies are not ready for circle, we tell them to sit on a chair or find a quiet spot where they can work so their energy is geared towards what they're doing." Green encourages teachers to see a

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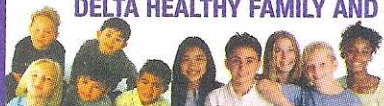
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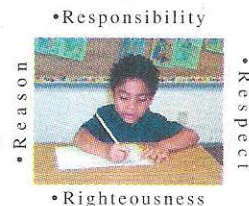
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