

## Learning Strengths

The most common Learning Strengths in people with autism are:

- remembering information he sees more easily and it sticks with him/her
- seeing is believing
- responding readily to music and melody
- remembers music, melody and rhythm readily

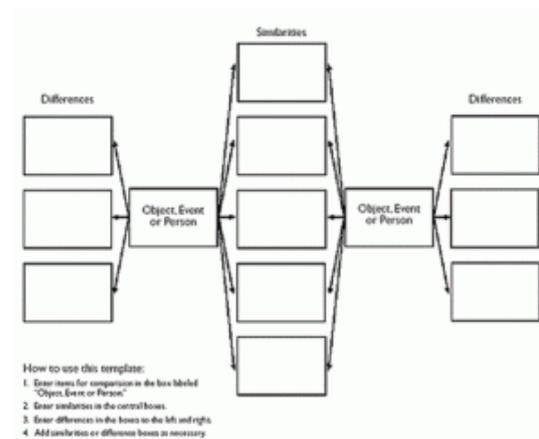
What do these Learning Strengths mean to how we help people with autism learn?

Here are a few ideas:

Approaches that exercise strength	Examples
Presenting information visually	Graphic organizers, PowerPoint
	Pictures, videos, visual images
	Written language, symbols
Demonstrating knowledge through visual means	Art project, pictures, posters
	Videos, cartoons
	PowerPoint, maps, charts



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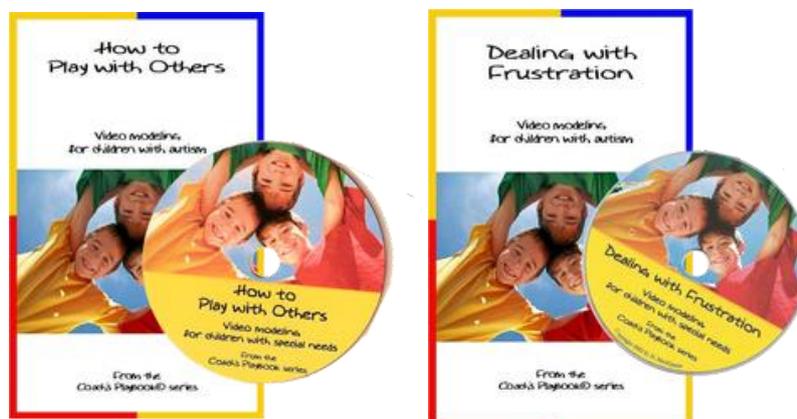
Approaches exercise strength	Examples
Presenting information through rhythm and/or melody	Songs, music videos
	Rhythmic approaches such as finger math
	Use soft background music
Demonstrating knowledge through rhythm and/or melody	Practicing or memorizing to rhythm or melody
	Composing songs, creating music videos
	Making up new lyrics to familiar tune

These learning strengths help you understand why video modeling and storybooks can be powerful learning tools with children with autism.

**Video modeling is an ideal format for children with autism because videos are visual and they:**

- make an experience exactly repeatable
- give a child lots of time to take in, understand and remember the information
- provide strong visual information and cues
- make learning more relaxed and pleasurable - videos are fun don't look like 'therapy'.

I developed the content for two professionally-produced videos. I called them Coach's Playbook because they isolate important information by using stop-action and highlighting, like a coach reviewing the plays by his/her team. The strategies and principles presented are generalizable to many settings - they're not just isolated skills. One video is *How to Play with Others* which teaches children how to engage other children in play. The second is *Dealing with Frustration* that shows children how to remain calm and plan how to help themselves when they're frustration.



**Storybooks offer magical ways to promote learning because they:**

- are visual - a lot of children with autism love printed words
- are structured and organized and often have a rhythm
- let you repeat them over and over
- provide clear language models with rich vocabulary
- are a normal part of childhood and don't look like therapy
- promote back-and-forth interactions and active engagement with each child

I wrote a manual, ***One Story at a Time***, to help therapists and teachers make the most of storybooks to enhance children's development.

