Multiple Intelligences Theory

Multiple Intelligences Theory was developed by Dr. Howard Gardner. Through research he determined that children learn in different ways, and identified eight “intelligences,” or pathways, through which children learn best.

When practitioners understand that there are many ways that a child might learn, they can present information to children using many different methods, tools, and environments. Here are some suggested ways to apply the concepts of multiple intelligences as you plan to meet the needs of the children in your care.

Linguistic intelligence:
Love to use words both in writing and speaking.
• Provide a variety of writing tools around the room.
• Provide a variety of written material around the classroom.
• Use new words and definitions to enrich vocabulary.

Logical-mathematical intelligence:
Like numbers and think in terms of cause and effect.
• Provide games such as dominoes and checkers.
• Add science activities showing cause and effect.
• Provide objects to count and create patterns with.

Visual-spatial intelligence:
Think in pictures, tend to be creative with strong fine motor skills.
• Provide variety of art materials for creating.
• Enjoy jigsaw puzzles.
• Add pictures to daily schedules and labels.

Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence:
Very aware of body and like to move frequently.
• Provide frequent breaks to stretch and move.
• Incorporate role playing and charades into lessons.
• Add large blocks to child care or classroom for building.
Musical intelligence:
Hear music in their heads, aware of sounds, enjoy musical instruments and songs.
- Use rhythm to count—then add drums, clapping, or other instruments.
- Sing songs to announce transitions and activities.
- Create a corner where children can listen to variety of music on their own.

Interpersonal intelligence:
Enjoy others; interact well with many friends; make good leaders.
- Develop group or partnered activities.
- Provide puppets and props for cooperative play.
- Pair this child with another who needs support.

Intrapersonal intelligence:
Aware of their own personal needs; want space to process things.
- Provide areas for personal quiet space.
- Include scrapbooking and journaling activities.
- Create independent listening or computer centers.

Naturalist intelligence:
Enjoy anything having to do with nature and the outdoors.
- Create scavenger hunts and other outdoor activities.
- Add a classroom pet, outdoor bird feeder and/or plants to the space.
- Include pictures of animals and plants around the room.