

# Nurturing Strengths: Simultaneous Processing

Resilient children experience a sense of accomplishment and joy each time they engage an area of personal strength. These children often find what makes them feel proud and they develop the confidence and self-esteem needed to persevere in the future. Their lives can become a cycle of affirmation in which they can continue to grow in confidence and maturity while they learn to positively engage in new situations and the challenges of daily life. Other children, however, may have personal strengths that are unrecognized, especially at school, which can make them view their world negatively.

Academically challenged students may watch their peers readily achieve success in the classroom and label them smart but have a poor view of themselves because they do not do well in school. Even when they are successful, it may feel more like an accident or luck, and they do not give themselves credit for their accomplishments. Other children may have trouble recognizing their achievement because it does not match what a parent or teacher has defined as success. For example, despite having an incredible skill for computer programming, a child with learning disabilities may still be described as a “poor student” due to low grades.

When a child has a strength, that strength should be recognized and *nurtured*. Nurturing a child's strength helps that child develop confidence. This helps the strength grow and, in turn, can help the child succeed and even overcome weaknesses or obstacles he or she may encounter.

## How to Use Nurturing Strengths: Simultaneous Processing

---

Successful experiences help children recognize their strengths, which leads to improved self-esteem and the capacity to overcome daily challenges. When children show a strength in Simultaneous processing, it means that they understand how individual parts fit into the whole. They will do well on visual-spatial tasks, such as using maps and the organization of ideas into groups. Use the following recommendations as a guideline to nurture the kind of successful experiences children need in order to help them discover and use their strength in Simultaneous processing:

1. *Identify a child's strength.* Formal testing may reveal a child's strength in Simultaneous processing. However, good observation and use of the Cognitive Assessment System (CAS; Naglieri, 1999) may also help identify a child's strength.
2. *Recognize a child's strength.* A child should be told when he or she has a strength in Simultaneous processing, and the process should be explained to the child (see the Teaching Students About Simultaneous Processing handout, p. 60). Help the child recognize that he or she has ability and control by providing experiences that match the child's strengths. In other words, give the child opportunities to show what he or she can do by encouraging the child to do things that involve Simultaneous processing. Some suggestions include

- Building a model
  - Completing puzzles
  - Creating a map or web of pictures or information
  - Creating a family tree
  - Making lists of how categories of things are similar (e.g., food groups)
  - Making a pattern or meaningful design
  - Making a collage
  - Networking people for a party or job
3. *Celebrate a child's accomplishments by expressing support and enthusiasm for what he or she does.* Children feel more successful when they are acknowledged and appreciated for what they do. When a child has a strength in Simultaneous processing, it should be celebrated so the child is proud of the strength and comfortable using that strength, as well as encouraged to use it whenever possible. Those around the child should watch for times when the child uses or could use Simultaneous processing, point it out, and recognize it.
  4. *Give a child time to let his or her strengths develop.* Some children take longer than others to develop the solid foundation of skills needed to achieve. However, the more opportunities children are given to use their skills and find success in their strengths, the more likely they will be to expand upon these skills and overcome more difficult challenges. When a child has a strength in Simultaneous processing, he or she might not readily use it, but with time and encouragement it will develop.

## **Who Should Use Nurturing Strengths: Simultaneous Processing?**

---

The core feature of Simultaneous processing is the ability to understand how things go together, that is, how the different interrelated parts comprise the whole. Children who are good at this should be encouraged to use the strength whenever possible. Creating situations that highlight this process and celebrating children's abilities will help them feel competent and successful while they continue to learn. Use the ideas presented here and the handouts *Simultaneous Processing Explained* (p. 59) and *Teaching Students About Simultaneous Processing* (p. 60) as a springboard for more ways to nurture children's strengths in Simultaneous processing.

## **Resources**

---

- Brooks, R., & Goldstein, S. (2002). *Raising resilient children: Fostering strength, hope, and optimism in your child*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Naglieri, J.A. (1999). *Essentials of CAS assessment*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.