

Welcome to Empowering  
Homeschool Conversations,  
your authority in  
navigating the world of  
homeschooling diverse learners.

Featuring Peggy Ployer from  
Sped Homeschool,  
Annie Yorty from AnnieYorty.com,  
Leilani Melendez from Living with Eve,  
Stephanie Buckwalter from eLARP Learning,  
and Dawn Jackson from Dawn  
Jackson Educational  
Consulting and Tutoring.

With over seventy five years  
of combined homeschooling expertise,  
experiences and perspectives,  
this group is eager to  
share their wealth of  
wisdom to empower your  
homeschooling journey.

So grab your favorite mug,  
settle in and get ready for  
insightful discussions,

valuable insights and practical tips.

Give your homeschool the  
power boost it needs to  
successfully educate the  
unique learners in your home.

Yay!

Hi!

Hello, Maria, Emma.

Hi, Dawn.

Hi, my name's Dawn Jackson.

I am with Dawn Jackson

Coaching and Solomar Academy.

And I'm here today with a wonderful,

I can't say part two,

but my second time

interviewing you here on

Empowering Homeschool Conversations.

And I just want to share a

little bit about you.

So I have my guest today is a trailblazer.

in the field of education.

As an educational therapist, sorry,

and learning success coach,

she has spent over three  
decades empowering families  
to help their children  
succeed by embracing their  
unique learning styles.

Maria Emma is the co-author  
of the Self-Portrait Power  
Traits Assessment and the  
popular book Discover Your  
Child's Learning Style,  
along with a host of other  
resources designed to make  
learning engaging and joyful.

Her innovative approaches  
have helped countless students thrive,  
and her work continues to  
inspire parents and educators like me.

Maria Emma's passion is to  
ensure that learning doesn't have to hurt,  
and instead it can be a lighthearted,  
fulfilling journey.

We're excited to dive into  
her expertise today and

discover new ways to

support our unique learners.

So please join me, everyone,

in welcoming Maria Emma Willis.

Thank you, Dawn.

It's nice to be here again.

I know.

So we talked a little bit

before we jumped on to just

about jumping into the

questions because we have a

lot of great stuff today planned.

And if you're a parent listening to this,

you're thinking about homeschooling,

you're

kind of teary eyed or worried,

take out a notepad today

because we're really going

to cover some amazing

information about how your child learns.

And I think you're really

going to enjoy it.

So are you ready?

So we're going to jump in.

I'm ready.

You go ahead.

Can you click on the PowerPoint?

Not yet.

I will.

You want me to do that right away?

Okay.

Okay.

So I will.

I'm going to pull up that

PowerPoint right now.

There it is.

So my first question today

is how can parents create

an environment where

students feel encouraged to

take risks and make

mistakes as part of the learning process?

Okay, so that is a great question.

And it goes right in with this,

which is that the number

one thing you need for learning,

real learning to take place is safety.

And so, you know, a lot of parents, well,

what do you mean it's safe?

We're at home.

But there are lots of kinds of safety.

There's the physical safety, of course,

like, you know, if students are afraid.

And I know this is going on

in schools nowadays.

So if you're afraid that, you know,

something bad's going to happen,

you can't think about

learning because you're

afraid for yourself, right?

That's one kind of safety.

But there's also...

emotional safety and that's

the thing that says like

nobody's gonna like if I

can't get this math or I

don't understand what she

just said or he just said

nobody's gonna laugh at me

or or if I ask a question

nobody's gonna say well

that's a stupid question or

weren't you listening um

Because a lot of times we say that,

you know, or think that anyway,

weren't you listening?

Well,

they could be listening and still not

understand what you were

trying to ask or say.

So this is very important.

No one will laugh,

scold or punish me if I

don't get something,

if I don't understand something.

And then learning safety is

kind of the same as emotional safety.

The mistakes are okay.

You know, and I always say like, well,

sometimes teachers do this

too and parents as teachers

or anybody even coaches in

the field will say why did  
you do that you know you're  
not supposed to do that or  
or didn't you learn about that yet well  
if the child knew everything,  
he wouldn't have to be in school.  
So, I mean, that's part of learning.  
And you might make the same  
mistake several times  
because you don't have it down yet.  
And that should be okay.  
You can try things out.  
You can see if it works.  
You can do it again.  
And it still doesn't work.  
It's kind of like when kids  
are learning to ride a bike  
or tie a shoelace or something.  
You don't expect them to do  
it that very first time.  
Right.  
You know,  
usually adults don't say to the child,



oh my gosh,

you got a D in bike riding today.

I hope you do better tomorrow.

I mean,

nobody says that because you get it.

You get, it's a developmental, it's,

you know, you gotta, you gotta get there.

It's stages of learning.

And so it's the same with this.

It doesn't matter how old you are,

what grade you're in.

Because you could be in the

sixth grade and not understand fractions.

You could be in the second

grade and understand them.

It just depends on the learner.

So this is very important for learning.

And that's how you create that space.

And I'm going to share on

that learning safety piece,

just as a teacher and a

credential teacher,

that what I see a lot of

times is even coming from the teacher,

The general education teacher,

I'm a special ed, but general ed,

there's this criteria for every student.

And if you don't meet it,

there is a shaming process

that can happen.

Because teachers have a very set schedule.

They're very rigid oftentimes,

and they want to accomplish

so much every day.

And if you're more of a

different kind of a learner

that takes time to maybe

talk about it or work it through,

there's no time for that.

There's just no time.

And so instead they will

kind of call on the special

ed department to take care

of that one because they fall out of it.

But you know, at home, if, if,

if the parent you know most

parents just went to  
traditional school so even  
if even if they didn't like  
it or thought you know it  
could be different if you  
don't know that there are  
other possibilities as the  
parent teacher you think oh  
well I think that's the way  
it has to be so you might  
duplicate what's going on  
in the classroom so  
Here we're informing you and  
giving you information and  
even permission that no,  
it doesn't have to be  
teaching doesn't have to be that way.  
Learning doesn't have to be that way.  
That's exciting.  
That's exciting.  
Yeah, so learning doesn't have to hurt.  
That's the whole thing.  
It doesn't have to hurt.

It can be fun and engaging.

I'm not saying it's never

going to be hard.

It can be hard,

but it doesn't have to hurt,

which means shaming, feeling less than,

you know, even depression.

I'm never going to learn this.

I'm stupid.

All of that.

You don't want that.

And success leads to more success.

So if if if a child or even an adult,

you know,

if you're doing you're learning

something new and you keep

not getting it and you

think everybody else is.

That's not going to help you

continue and think, okay, well,

if I keep going, I will be successful.

No,

you have to have some successful

experiences in that new  
thing in order to believe  
that you can be successful.

So we'll talk more about  
that as we go along.

And then we always say  
coaching brings out the star.

Act as one of those wonderful,  
amazing coaches that you've heard of.

You know,  
just encourage their students or their,  
what do you call them, like even athletes,  
you know,  
the coaches that know how to  
push in the right way.

Right.

And to bring out that star.

Right.

Yeah.

Yeah.

We have some stories around that one.

Yeah.

Lots of good stories.

We call it adjustable seats.

You know,

you have adjustable seats in cars

and planes and everywhere.

And in fact,

there's a whole TED talk about this,

which I love.

And the whole idea is, you know,

actually in the military,

they used to have

well,

planes that had all same kind of seat,

like the pilots that

piloted these planes.

It was as if everybody was average.

And they left out a whole

bunch of people if they

were shorter or taller or

longer legs or whatever.

They could not be a great

pilot because the seats didn't move.

And so actually, the military figured out,

wait, why can't we make them adjustable?

And everywhere,  
because you might have  
longer arms with shorter legs.  
You might have this or that.  
Nobody is totally average in  
every single aspect.  
And it's the same, you know,  
with our brains for learning.  
Nobody has all of the average qualities of,  
we say average learner,  
but there's really no such thing.  
And so we have the  
equivalent of adjustable seats.  
And we call them the power  
traits for life.  
These are different aspects  
of learning styles or learning strengths.  
There's the dispositions, modalities,  
talents, interests, environment.  
And each one is composed of  
different characteristics here.  
And we're not going to cover  
everything here today

because there's a lot.

But we will cover everything.

a lot of it to show how all

of this goes into making a

safe environment,

a great learning

environment and encouraging environment.

That's great.

yeah so um okay so that's my

view I think okay I think I

have a question you're just

taking it in soaking I was

kind of taking it into like

about our assessments and

everything but um I want to

ask then on what are the

key signs that a student

has a growth mindset or a

mindset that's even aware

of their strengths versus a fixed mindset

And how can parents foster a

growth mindset in the home

school environment?



Okay, well, that's a big question here.

Kids that, and it goes for adults as well,

but especially younger kids

as they're starting out, you know,

the whole learning journey,

when they see themselves being successful,

that gives them a growth mindset.

Like, for example,

I was the perfect school student,

and this is part of why I

went into this whole field.

Because from the time I started school,

I didn't even speak English

when I started kindergarten

because we spoke Italian in my house.

My mom didn't speak English.

So my dad didn't know that.

Yeah.

So they were both from Italy,

but my dad had been here

already and he spoke

English with a very heavy accent.

But my mom knew no English.

And so it was all Italian in my house.

And so when I started kindergarten,

I didn't speak a word of English.

And I don't even remember

not speaking English.

I mean,

I just remember I went to school

and I spoke English.

That does not happen with everybody.

There are so many kids who

go to school not speaking

English and they don't have

that language strength

where they can just switch over,

but I did.

And so because I had that

language strength that went

into spelling and reading and everything,

So I was the perfect school student.

I was the eighth student

from the minute I started

till I finished my master's

in special ed.

And I also have a lifetime  
teaching credential in  
California for regular and special ed.  
But when I even was in elementary school,  
I remember thinking,  
why are those kids so dumb?  
The kids that were getting D's and F's,  
why don't they just do their work?  
What is wrong with them?  
And I was always interested in that.  
And especially because the  
kids that did get those poor grades,  
I knew they knew more than I  
did they were like geniuses  
at science and history and  
geography they knew  
everything because I I  
would hear them like if the  
teacher asked a question  
they would have all this  
information but they  
couldn't pass the test they  
were terrible at spelling

they were terrible at  
writing you know all of that  
A student stuff that you need.  
And so that's why I went  
into this because first I thought, oh,  
they have learning problems.  
They have this.  
And I majored in that in college.  
And then I realized after  
getting my master's,  
that wasn't all of it.  
kids are just different  
people are different and  
they learn differently and  
I started to learn about  
that outside of my masters  
and then started creating  
my own materials and then  
met victoria who became my  
business partner and we  
created this self-portrait  
um and uh our book and lots  
of other things because

that was our goal let's not  
make any other kids go  
through this of what we saw  
when we were in school right so  
If you are failing every day at everything,  
it could be at home or it  
could be at a traditional classroom.  
But if every day you look at  
that math and you go, no,  
another page of math and I  
don't get it and I barely,  
I don't even know, I'm by accident,  
I'm getting some of them  
right and I don't get it.  
Or it could be any subject, right?  
You will never have a growth mindset.  
right right so you have to  
have some successes and see  
that it's possible to learn  
and that's what this is  
about find out how your  
child learns what are their  
learning strengths how do

they best get that  
information into their  
brains and when are they  
not ready maybe to do that  
You know,  
most kids aren't ready to learn  
to read when they're five,  
six or even seven.  
Right.  
Especially boys.  
They're not ready till eight or nine.  
And if we start cramming it  
when they're younger,  
then they see they can't do  
it right away.  
That shuts everything down.  
And that's the start of not  
having a growth mindset.  
Yeah.  
It's so true.  
And have successes.  
And when we look at all of their strengths,  
like is in this chart, dispositions,

modalities, et cetera,

then we can gear and

customize the program for

those strengths.

Then they're going to go, oh, wow,

I can do that.

Oh, I can do that.

Oh, maybe I can do this.

And then they can figure out

and they learn how to learn.

I love that.

I know a lot of the work

that I do with students is

coaching them in that in

their strength because once

you have that it's kind of

like stabilizing the

central nervous system we

just did a podcast on that

but it's like this

awareness of who they are

right and that they're so

valuable and so precious

but it's not something like

we have to tell them it's

like here's proof this is

what you right right

Yes.

And kids who are not used to that.

Oh my gosh.

They're like,

everything changes their

whole facial expression.

I mean,

you can see it sort of like coming

from the inside, like, I can do this.

You know,

that's a whole different feeling

for them.

You,

you and I and Victoria have talked

extensively how sometimes I struggle and

with the youngers when the

littles the kindergartners

when they're sitting there

I walk into their classroom



and you know gone are the

days of the interactive

play I mean they still do

that but it's very

controlled it's not like

ongoing but there's you

know that emphasis on writing

And reading sight words already, which,

you know,

I don't mind that in like a fun

kind of relaxed way,

but it's part of the curriculum and it's,

they're measured by that.

Yes, it's too bad.

And some kids,

like I look at some of those little,

and I'm telling you, boys and girls,

it's not just boys anymore, that are just,

they're a deer in the headlight,

you know.

they're with the headlights

in their eyes and their,

their brain is just not ready for it.

It's just developmentally, you know,  
that's why I love classical education.  
Cause it talks about the  
developmental stages of it,  
but not all children are at that level,  
especially if they have, you know,  
or learning challenges,  
physical challenges, speech challenges,  
hearing challenges, geez, you know,  
and it's hard to measure  
hearing when they're little, but,  
Or their eyes.  
Or their dyslexia.  
I mean, all kinds of stuff can show up.  
So anyway, keep going.  
And even just regular old...  
I'm sort of going to say  
average in a way.  
Just regular kids.  
They're not all ready to do that.  
I was.  
I was ready to read.  
Yeah, you were born ready.

Fine.

You know, and people are.

But it's a very small  
percentage because in any classroom,  
traditional classroom of...

I don't know, twenty five to thirty kids.

We had forty when I was in  
elementary school.

It was a private Catholic  
school and we had forty kids.

But only three to five get  
all the A's in any  
classroom because that's  
the percentage of kids who  
have the magic formula of  
all these things we're  
going to talk about today.

The the exact right  
strengths for the  
traditional type classroom.

And if you're doing that at home,  
you're duplicating it.

So we hope that you will

feel free after this to  
really customize and change things up and,  
you know,  
do it for your own child's  
learning strength.

So the dispositions are our  
learning personalities.

They can show up at an early age,  
two or three years old already.

You're seeing,  
you know how parents will say, oh,  
that's my little debater.

that's my little attorney or  
right oh that's my kid that  
can you know draw anything  
because they're already

drawing when they're little  
kids or or that's my kind

one not to say that the  
others aren't but it's like  
you can really see already  
how they're so um

considerate of other kids

and adults and they want to

help everybody right oh

yeah you can see these

things very early on

And these are the

dispositions and quickly

spontaneous disposition.

So the word is move.

They need to move and they

learn best when they're

doing and moving and

manipulating that kind of stuff.

The organized is the plan.

That's me.

And you need that to be really high.

If you're going to survive

in a typical traditional

in a classroom or even

homeschool environment so

that's you know you plan

you make lists you have a

calendar I mean I did all

that when I was fine I was

already like it's just  
natural it's like I would  
make schedules for the day  
wow that's so cute at home  
I would make schedules for  
the day right so my brother  
never from me and he  
thought it was stupid  
yeah like I you know would  
have like okay so we play  
for an hour we rest for  
fifteen minutes we watch  
this show on TV then we eat  
lunch then we go he's going  
what I'm not doing that  
yeah I'm doing whatever I want he was  
spontaneous and imaginative  
I you know now I know um  
curious that's the little  
scientist that it could be  
in anything it could be  
cure you know cooking or  
it's all about

experimenting and trying  
things out and asking a  
million questions and and  
this this type can get in  
trouble even adults for  
asking questions tons of  
questions sometimes the  
questions don't sound like  
they are related to anything you're doing  
Right.

You're learning this in history.

And then the person asks a  
question that sounds like,  
where'd that come from?

But I promise you it's  
connected because they were  
hearing what you were  
saying or what they were reading.

And it triggered this stuff over here,  
which is how brilliant  
innovations come about.

That's that kind of brain,  
that sort of scientific brain supportive.

It's all about interact.

make sure everything is fair

and harmonious and work with others,

collaborate.

And imaginative is those of

the people that often we say daydreamers,

because there's so much in

their heads coming up with

new ideas and artists can

be included in that, authors maybe.

I know we've talked about it, Dawn,

because I think that's your highest,

right?

um it's somewhere between

imaginative and spontaneous

and curious and I was thinking to myself

boy, that's just a,

that's a bomb waiting to go

off right there.

Spontaneous, serious, imaginative child.

Like they don't stop moving.

They don't stop talking.

They don't stop thinking, you know, I mean,



it really has.

Yeah.

So if you're spontaneous and imaginative,

chances are,

if you're an adult right now

that you might've been

labeled ADD or ADHD in school,

and maybe your child is,

is spontaneous and

imaginative and you're

wondering about that so

well my work we never label anybody

Right.

We just look at strengths.

Oh, that's a spontaneous learner.

Of course he has to move.

Oh, that's an imaginative learner.

Of course, you know,

or curious or whichever.

And there are better ways to

present information or for

them to learn depending on

which one of these they are.

And they carry that into adulthood.

So if they learn now how to

work with these strengths,

it'll be with them forever.

And let me just ask this question,

tagging onto this slide.

What are the potential

consequences of a child

developing a negative

disposition toward learning early on?

Like I can, I can think of one in general,

but what would you say?

Like,

say the child was spontaneous as a

little youngster, you know, three, four,

five,

put him in a kindergarten class

where he has to sit and not

move until they say move.

And now that part of his

learning disposition is

being kind of squelched.

Yeah, yeah.

How would that impact?

their learning early on yeah

it impacts everything and

their attitude toward

learning it's like I mean

first of all little kids

are supposed to be moving

anyway right right apart

from the these dispositions

because you know as you're

growing that's how you

learn more through play

It could be imaginative play,

it could be big play, climbing, you know,

running, whatever.

But definitely there are

kids that are in

kindergarten even preschool

that are more active than

other kids like I was a

pretty quiet sit down I

liked to color already when

I was little and there are

those kids um not that I  
didn't also like to run and  
do things but I could sit  
if I needed to some other  
kids it's just so anti who  
they are they need to be  
moving to learn um so  
it impacts right away they  
learn right away that young  
either in pre-k or k I don't belong here  
Right.

There's something wrong with me.

So, well, it goes to one of two ways.

There's something wrong with  
me or I hate this place.

They don't know what they're  
doing kind of thing.

You know, I mean,

they might not be thinking

those exact words,

but it's either this is a

terrible place or there's

something terrible about me.

Yeah.

You know, one or the other.

So it definitely impacts.

I can see that attitude

toward learning from then on.

right and see these are the

school preferred

dispositions the organized

and they're only about ten

percent of people in the

population and support it

because if you have those

two which I do it's like

you know you're you're uh

first of all you're

organized you get all of

the count you know

everything is done on time

and handed in and you don't

forget your assignments and

And then supportive,

you want to be

collaborative and work with

others and work with the  
teacher and so on.

So this is part of the magic  
formula for doing well.

Yeah.

And so the actual population,  
there are about thirty  
percent of people in the  
population that are imaginative.

And again, these are often labeled ADD.  
curious,  
twenty-five to thirty percent of  
the population, they're often labeled ADD,  
and spontaneous is often  
labeled hyperactive,  
and that's about ten  
percent of the population.

So instead of labeling,  
let's just look at what are they good at?

How can they learn best?

And the thing is that the  
majority of inventors, scientists,  
entrepreneurs, musicians, poets,

artists of all kinds, the thinkers,  
the philosophers, the creative people,  
these are all people we go, oh, wow,  
they're amazing, right?

When they're adults.

But as kids,  
it's almost like we're  
punishing them for having  
these types of strengths.

Well,

the sad part is a lot of people  
aren't teachers.

And if you do have a teacher  
that's high and curious or  
spontaneous or imaginative.

it's uh probably not in the  
public school setting it's  
probably homeschooling well  
we've done yeah I mean  
because when we work with  
schools teachers take that  
self-portrait as well right  
over and over again the

majority of teachers are uh  
uh organized organized  
exactly supportive those  
two um and the majority of kids  
are not they're one of these  
or a combination of these  
and so it's really  
interesting because if you  
think about it teach people  
that go into teaching are  
more the organized right  
and supportive types of  
strengths and they did good  
in school so now they  
continue to do good becoming a teacher  
I don't know why I went into teaching,  
honestly,  
because that organizes not my strength.  
Well,  
but you're one of the few that we  
like that when there are other people,  
because for some reason you  
had that heart of passing



it on and teaching.

And so there are always, you know,

maybe ten percent, five percent.

that are the curious, spontaneous,

imaginative.

And those are the teachers, right?

That kids will say, I love this teacher.

Love my teacher.

This teacher does this and that.

And it's so fun and exciting

and interesting, right?

Yeah.

I love it.

I mean,

I love I love working with children.

I love working with parents.

So it's just so rewarding.

There's it's wonderful.

It is.

So the students who are not

those two are often labeled,

as we said before,

even dyslexic or learning disabled.

They can they can experience

failure almost every day.

They don't realize that they're smart.

I mean, really brilliant.

And they don't know they

have limited possibilities.

So they grow up believing

they have nothing to contribute.

And we've worked with so

many adults who have come

for themselves to learn

about their own strengths.

And they're still stuck in

fifth grade or third grade

or whatever grade when they

thought that was when they

learned that they were not very smart.

Correct.

And they couldn't do much.

So this is just a quick

sample of what you might do

with the different dispositions.

So if you were learning

about something in science,  
it's ocean study in science, let's say.

So the curious person, the first one,  
would maybe invent, draw,  
or make a new kind of sea creature.

And this symbol stands for the organized,  
lists the major ocean and  
seas of the world because  
they like doing the, you know,  
the facts and information,  
that kind of thing.

The imaginative might draw, paint,  
or make a scrapbook or collage.

The supportive might  
collaborate with some other  
people on a project.

And the spontaneous might  
write a rap song or put a  
play together or do some  
kind of a demonstration.

So that's just a quick idea  
of how you can customize.

They're still learning the same stuff,

but in different ways and  
showing you what they  
learned in different ways.  
So then the modalities,  
these are usually when  
people say learning styles  
or learning strengths,  
most people only know about modalities.  
And these are the modalities,  
how your brain takes in information.  
But as you can see in our approach,  
we say that there's more to it.  
And that's why we have the dispositions,  
the talents,  
and those other things you  
saw in the chart beginning.  
So modalities are  
information processing equipment.  
What's the best way for your  
brain to take in and process ideas,  
information, and learning of any kind?  
And so we have the listening and verbal.  
The people who get it really

well when they can listen, audiobooks,  
lectures, videos.

Verbal means you have to say  
it out loud to really get it.

And some people,  
how they sort of walk and  
talk to themselves, that's that.

But they can also record themselves.

Like when you study for a test,  
you can read out loud yourself.

You can discuss with others  
or teach someone.

Eighty-five percent of  
classroom instruction  
requires the listening modality,  
but about twenty percent of  
learners have that strength.

Wow.

So that puts it in perspective.

And then there's the picture modality.

Illustrations, images, charts, graphs,  
maps, videos,  
flashcards with words don't

work for a picture learner.

Words are not pictures.

So maybe we can do one

podcast sometime about

reading because spelling,

people think that, oh, well, he's visual.

You use flashcards.

No, visual means picture.

Right.

Words are not pictures and

they're gobbledygook.

They're all these little symbols.

And to some people,

they mean nothing until

they've really figured out the code,

so to speak.

um there is a print learner

so I'm a print learner and

that's a person for whom

reading comes naturally or

pretty easily and of course

they get good information

when they can read anything

but ninety five percent of  
school studies even at home  
if you use traditional  
materials require print and  
many more students are  
picture learners than print learners

The movement modalities.

So there's whole body where you use your,  
you know,  
you go on a field trip or you  
make a giant clock and you  
can walk and become the  
hands of the clock, that kind of thing,  
or build something.

Hands-on where you make models,  
you use clay,  
you're taking something apart.

Sketching,  
drawing and doodling are part of that.

And then there's the writing learner.

And that's taking notes, making outlines.

And the writing learner  
usually also is pretty

easily learns to spell

because when they write it,

they can remember it.

Right.

And so if you're not a writing learner,

you're not a good speller.

And so to make your

non-spellers write the word

over and over again,

I can tell you that does not work.

they might learn one or two

words like that.

But, you know, when I went to school,

they made the kids,

whatever they missed on spelling tests,

they had to write a hundred times.

They still couldn't spell, right?

So don't do that.

I do love that.

The multisensory approach

through like Orton Gillingham,

because of the interactive pieces,

like if we're spelling a word,



We'll chop it out.

We'll sound it out.

We'll make a connection to the body.

We might spell the word in

Play-Doh or write it in the sand,

write it in the air.

I mean,

but just to write it over and over.

No, it doesn't have to say it.

They have to tap it.

I love tapping out sounds.

I see my fifth and sixth

graders tapping out sounds now.

That's great, yeah.

Oh, it's so, and I'm like,

do not be embarrassed.

No.

No,

and the equivalent of that is adding on

your fingers.

There's nothing wrong with that.

Exactly.

I know we have to teach them.

No, no.

way right right exactly yeah

so fifty to sixty percent

of people are whole body

hands-on learners so that's

wow more than half of the

population usually needs to

move or do something in

order to learn best and of

course in our materials for

learning for regular school

uh it's print listening and

writing are the big deals

But the actual population,

sixty to seventy percent

are hands on and whole body

and twenty percent picture learners.

So we have to take that into account.

Now, these are our surroundings,

the environment.

And I'm just going to go

quickly through these

because we want to get to, you know,

coaching and how we can.

yeah help families but

basically it's just that

our surroundings can really

affect how we learn and for

some people it affects them

more than others you know

schools think quiet sitting

up and being alone is the

magic formula but for many

people they need music or

some kind of noise

Or standing up at a, you know,

like a drafting table type

thing where it's a tall

table or even sitting on a beanbag chair.

Or they need dim light.

Or, you know,

the warm temperature doesn't

do it for them.

Or if they're cold, they can't learn.

So all of these things can be looked at.

And you can't change every single thing.

But it starts the conversation.

And for some people,

they couldn't care less if, you know.

the room was purple or whatever.

But maybe for that one person,

I've had families tell me, oh my gosh,

when we changed the

tablecloths on the table,

all of a sudden they sat

there and did their work

because before that they

didn't realize I hate this color,

but you know, nobody's tuned into that,

like it's affecting them.

So it can be that simple

just to change the color of

something for some students.

I have a great story around

that real quick.

So in Solmar, we have a guy,

a kid who just started

homeschooling this last year.

And mom could not get him on

board for anything.

He is on the spectrum,

but he just couldn't, couldn't, couldn't.

And I said, well,

tell me about where he's learning,

what his space looks like.

Well, he doesn't,

he kind of shares a desk

with his brother.

So of course, you know,

I wiped all that out and

ended up getting mom buying

one of those border divider things.

Yeah, the Carol, it's called a Carol,

I think.

A Carol, yeah.

So just to have his space,

brother moved to a different space.

Brother wasn't being homeschooled,

but this guy needed his space.

Do you know, after he got,

she bought him his pencils, his materials,

all of his things.

The day after they set that up,  
he was up at six o'clock in  
the morning doing his school,  
sitting at his desk.

No one was telling him what to do.

It was amazing.

It was like night and day transformation.

Yeah,

sometimes just something like that  
can change everything.

And he probably feels important,  
like going to work, you know,  
like my purpose.

And I

This is my space.

Right.

Yeah.

That might not work for everybody.

Another kid might like being  
in the corner under the table, you know,  
doing their thing with a clipboard.

So, but I love that.

I love that.

He was high.

He was high on organized in

the self portrait.

Very high.

So I knew that was a telltale sign.

Yeah.

Okay,

interests are our greatest motivators.

Whenever you can bring interests in,

it'll drive learning like nothing else.

And so please don't take things away like,

you know,

you can't do soccer until you...

can spell this word or

something like that.

Because the interests are

what's going to drive the student.

And you can incorporate their interests.

For example, well,

first I'll say that it just

leads to resentment.

It doesn't motivate you if

things are taken away.

Yeah, it just doesn't.

But you can integrate things

like if they like cooking,

do the chemistry of cooking,

the history of horses,

the physics of skateboarding.

I've done all of this with my students.

There are books and materials for anything,

any of these kinds of things.

you know, approaches, put on skits,

create games, all of that.

So you can integrate what

they like into the

different subjects and

talents are natural gifts.

They come easily.

People don't always want to

go into their talents.

So that could be a problem

if a parent is forcing you to, you know,

you're good at math,

so you should be a mathematician.

Maybe you are good,



but you're not interested in that.

You have to have the interest.

Yeah, you have to be careful.

But here are some talents, you know.

And so, again,

you can weave these in when

a child has a talent and is interested,

then that makes for a

powerful motivation as well.

Yeah.

um okay so the self portrait

power traits assessment

that you mentioned it's for

eight years to adults it is

online and it looks at all

of these areas so it makes

it easy for you now you

don't have to do this you

can if you're a good

observer of your kids and you know you

you probably already know

some things like you

probably already know that

when your child doodles  
he's really listening to  
you and it's and it's  
helpful and it's better  
than if you make him just  
sit there and stare at you  
right but here's the thing  
you might know that but you might think  
But that's not right.  
How can I have him doodle  
when he's supposed to be listening to me?  
That's not right.  
So that's what these things  
give you permission and say, yes, no,  
that is exactly what he  
needs or a squeeze ball or  
something to twirl.  
Oh, I have my squeeze ball right here.  
I love it.  
because we don't say you  
know if you know someone  
who knits or crochets and  
do you know anybody like

that who like watches  
television or yeah he's on  
a conversation while  
they're doing that right I  
have never heard an adult  
say to another adult stop  
crocheting and pay attention  
Because you just know that  
their hands are busy and  
their whole focus is on  
whatever is going on.

And that's the same thing  
for kids who need that kind of thing.

Yeah.

And some teachers or, you know,  
helpers or whatever are  
very hung up on that piece  
of they're not giving me  
eye contact on the  
playground when I'm talking to them.

Right.

Well,

they are they are diagnosed with autism,

you know,

and that's a that's a goal that

we're working on.

But it's not something that's so easy.

So we have to look at other

ways of listening to each other.

And are they paying

attention even though

they're looking down?

or they're looking up, you know,

be aware and be present.

And I just want to add

before we go a little bit

further that parents,

you alluded to this earlier,

that parents often teach in

the way that they were taught.

And I really want to say that again,

because I try to bring that

up as much as possible on this podcast.

And anytime I get an

opportunity to talk to parents,

We have to change the

paradigm of our thinking,

of how we teach our children.

And I've spoken to parents who have said,

I don't know if this is working.

I don't know if this is right.

Well,

first you have to understand how your

child is taking in information.

And that's, you know,

the beauty of what we're

trying to do here today,

because if we just do it and this,

you know, this was real for me too,

as a teacher.

So before I was trained in all of this,

you trained me and

certified and all that.

I taught how I learned, you know, I was,

I wasn't, I was a good teacher,

but I didn't ever have the

bandwidth or the wherewithal

or the knowledge, right?

I just didn't know that

maybe this child is learning.

Why aren't they getting this?

Why aren't they remembering this?

I was talking to a dad today who said that,

oh, for Christmas,

the kids got these

computers and they have to

do all this learning before

they can play the games.

And I said,

But the question is,

are they really learning it?

Are they really,

why don't you ask questions

about what they just had to learn?

And if your child is not

learning it and holding

onto it and processing it,

that's not their modality.

Maybe they can learn it for

a couple of seconds or just

grasp it enough to play the games,

but are they really learning?

And that's a, that's a,

That's another podcast.

So we'll move on.

Yeah.

Well,

and I got all A's because I could

memorize.

I memorized everything the

teacher wanted and I was a good writer.

So I could just do that.

But, you know, like an hour later,

I forgot everything because

I had to go on to the next

test and the next test.

As I said before,

there were students getting

D's and F's that weren't

good at taking the test,

but they knew the information.

That's such an incredible thing.

They weren't able to give it

back in that way.

So when you're stuck,

you know,  
these are some real issues where  
go back and go,  
where's the student stuck?  
Where's the teacher stuck?  
Where are you stuck as a teacher?  
Look for clues.  
If you have used the self-portrait,  
look for clues.  
Or if you listen to this podcast,  
think about the different  
modalities and dispositions  
we've talked about and the  
characteristics and think, okay,  
what are some clues of how  
my student or my child learns?  
And then if you can go to  
Power Traits for Life,  
and there's a lot of information there.  
There are some guides to  
different ways of teaching  
for the different  
dispositions and modalities.



And discuss with your student,  
because often they come up  
with the best solutions  
when you're stuck.

So we've had lots of testimonials.

This has opened my eyes to  
how my son learns no more  
yelling to settle down and sit.

He needs to move and not have quiet,  
the total opposite of me.

I now offer options of  
standing and having music  
playing and so on.

I think this will totally  
make our homeschool journey  
much more enjoyable.

and then this one says we  
have been so incredibly  
thrilled with the whole  
assessment it's the most  
wonderful thing fantastic  
experience I'll make a  
world of difference for my

daughter I can't tell you  
how much struggle and  
frustration we've had for  
years this is the answer so  
Once you really look at who  
your child is and how they learn,  
you know, here's what this person said.

What a difference when I  
work with him and his learning style.

Yes.

Delight and motivation.

Oh, I love that.

Yeah.

So, Dawn, I know you...

have solomar academy so  
there's some slides in here  
about that if you want to  
talk about coaching how you  
do that this one shows the  
high school um there's a  
k-to-aid as well as a high  
school program for  
customizing oops let me go

back here for customizing

so if you want to talk about any of that

I would love to.

First and foremost,

I want to say that you are

still one of the coaches of

Solomar Academy.

Yes, I am.

It's such an honor to work

with you and Victoria still.

So the way we work is that, you know,

when a family comes along,

they take the assessment and, you know,

we try to have the parents take it too,

because we want to look at

you side by side with your child.

How do you take in information?

How do they...

And how can we connect that bridge?

But as a coach,

we help design the program.

It could be a very personalized program.

It can be a very standardized,

just academics according to your state.

And then we do coaching,

either weekly or monthly

coaching with your student.

It could be bimonthly.

However,

there is a tuition associated with

the cost, which I think is really, really

low still compared to other programs, but,

um,

we just love working with our families

and our kiddos.

These are some of the kids that, uh,

is that who is, who is the ninth grader?

Is that, um, Oh, what was her name?

Anyway,

I know she wasn't one of my students,

but I've read.

Yeah.

So these are past students

that are on the flyers.

So,

I'm not going to really give

their names okay yeah I was  
just wondering there's a  
ninth grader eleventh  
grader and a graduate here  
yeah and just to show give  
you an idea um and yeah  
they all were just shining  
that's what happens and  
then they start wanting to  
do stuff that you never  
thought they would even be  
interested oh I know it's  
amazing it's so exciting

On our website,  
some of them have written reviews.

If it's the same person,  
she wrote a really amazing  
review about college and  
being a student that could  
do way above and beyond her  
peers because of all that  
she was able to learn.

It is a unique, different,

a lot of programs out there say, oh,  
customized, personalized.

But as an educator,

I've worked in charter

schools and I've worked

with many homeschool families and

That's not always the case.

Oftentimes in charter schools,

they're saying personalized and all that,

but at the end of the day,

there's a lot of expectations.

I would honestly say we have more freedom.

We're not accredited, so there is that,

but it's just a wonderful journey.

I've had so much fun about

three or four years ago.

It's going on four years, right?

I think so.

I took over Solamar and Mary

Emma has been gracious to stay with me,

coach our families.

I love it.

I know.

You are so good, too.

And they love you.

And anyway, that's about it, really.

So hopefully.

Yeah.

Excuse me.

If the kids are younger, then it's,

you know,

it's more coaching with the parent.

Yes, exactly.

Then as they get a little older, I mean,

sometimes it's only the parent.

If they're like six years old,

they might be on for, you know,

five minutes and then go play.

And you're talking more to

the parent where they're saying, you know,

well, this works, but this doesn't.

Or should I do this?

And we kind of keep you on track.

Right.

Right.

right and then um oh sorry I

have a I have a little  
family where he he comes on  
and he's very particular  
he's highly unorganized  
about being there for his  
thirty minutes when that's  
done he's like I've had  
enough and then he walks  
out and then mom and I just  
continue and we keep  
talking sometimes he's  
listening in the background  
and he'll say something and  
I'll say well what do you  
think about that it's really  
It's a lot of fun.  
I mean, that's custom too,  
depending on the family and the kids,  
personalities and strength.  
So then as they get older, a lot of times,  
you know,  
the parent does continue to stay  
on and it's a conversation



with everybody.

I tend to say that, you know,  
as they get into middle school,  
high school,  
then often it's just the  
student with the coach,  
because a lot of times the  
parents want them to have  
that sort of their own time, you know,  
with us.

Exactly.

Yeah, it's really nice.

And also just for the record,  
we also do outside coaching  
with families.

You don't have to be.

in Solomar Academy.

We will do this whole assessment.

We will coach, get you up and running.

We love to work with brand

new families who are just

starting out and saying,

I don't even know where to begin.

We'll help you with curriculum.

We'll help you with a

learning plan for the semesters.

What else?

Well, we do progress reports, report cards,  
transcripts.

We do that piece.

But aside from that, just coaching.

If you're just saying,

I need some help getting started.

I'm not necessarily wanting

to be in a private school,

but can you help me?

So I've done that as well.

I know you do that as well.

Yeah.

yeah, it's a great, it's a great resource.

So hopefully if anyone's interested,

they'll reach out now we

can answer your questions and, um,

let me just check out that website.

Yeah.

And there's my phone number up there too.

Also, um,

I'm going to just end here cause I know,

Ooh, we have like five, five,

four minutes or something, but, um,

let me ask you this last

question how would it

behoove a parent and this

is probably simple question

but how would a behoove a

parent in their teaching of

their child if they knew their own

disposition and learning.

Oh,

I love that question because I think it's,

I think it's almost essential.

In fact,

just everybody in the family

knowing each other's

strengths goes a long way

toward harmony in the family or even,

you know,

figuring out which job each

person is going to do, which chore,

you know, those all kinds of stuff.

that you can do uh so but

especially if you're

teaching um if you know

your own bias like oh my

gosh so you know there's so

many parents are totally

opposite at least one kid

sometimes they are the same

as one child totally

opposite somebody else you

know and so to know that

it's not that they're trying to, you know,

get on your nerves.

It's just, this is how they are.

This is how you are.

So again, I work with all these families,

students that are not my

modality or my disposition or my talents,

but I know what they need.

And that's the thing.

It's what they need to learn,

not what you need to learn.

it completely changed  
everything about my  
teaching and all my years  
and experience especially  
working with children with  
autism because I tend to  
talk a lot and when I want  
to explain things and break  
things down and it really  
taught me that that's not  
how this child learns and  
I'm working with a student  
like that whereas I create  
the questions before we  
meet and I send them to him in an email

Like, this is where we're going to go.

This is what.

Yes.

And I stay on track.

You know, and I know could be a problem.

Also with your own kids that  
you homeschooled.

Yes.

It made such a difference,  
especially I'll never  
forget this with my middle daughter,  
Annie.

She would come home and go  
into a room and just shut  
down for a while.

And I was like, what's wrong?

What happened?

How are you today?

And ask her all these

questions and not realizing

her disposition.

She needed to disconnect from people.

and recharge her little

batteries before she could

come back out and be a part of it.

That there was something going on.

Are you being bullied?

What's happening?

You know,

this is in the latter years when

they went to a private school, but,

but yeah, so that really taught me.

I remember her that all my

children took the

assessment and teaching me, oh,

okay, this is how this child just has to,

you know, a little bit of an introvert.

And so it was,

it was really beautiful that

I backed off.

And it shows that this isn't

just for school.

No, this process isn't just for school.

In fact,

we've had some people say this is

better than marriage counseling.

Yeah.

Yeah.

In those brave families

where the dad takes the assessment,

all the siblings.

I had a little girl say to me one day.

I finally understand my dad and my sister.

Because the dad and the

sister were very

spontaneous and her and her

mother were very organized.

And they saw those two as

the troublemakers.

And now I taught them to see

them as the joy bringers.

They bring the joy.

And this is the little girl

like in fifth grade going,

You have totally changed the

way I see my dad and my sister.

That is a great way to end this, isn't it?

Okay.

Well, thank you, Mary Emma.

You know, I love you and I,

I just appreciate you so much.

Your gifts to the world.

I hope that everybody has

gotten something out of

this today and we'll reach

out to you or to Solomar if

you want any more



information or if we can

help you in any way.

So God bless you.

And thank you.

Thanks everyone.

This has been Empowering

Homeschool Conversations

provided by Sped Homeschool,

a nonprofit that empowers

families to home educate

diverse learners.

To learn more, visit [spedhomeschool.com](http://spedhomeschool.com).

This has been Empowering

Homeschool Conversations,

provided by Sped Homeschool,

a nonprofit that empowers

families to home educate

diverse learners.

To learn more, visit [spedhomeschool.com](http://spedhomeschool.com).