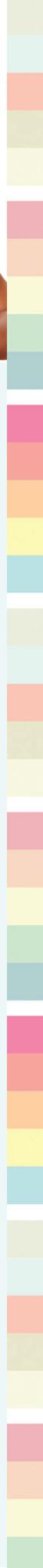




L E A R N

OVERVIEW OF ADULT LEARNING

KIDCARE
CANADA
nurturing the best possible start





OVERVIEW OF ADULT LEARNING

This document is for those who would like to know more about ADULT LEARNING so that your participants can enjoy optimal learning opportunities and retain significant messages.

Memory is essential to learning. In addition to some key aspects of adult learning theory, you will find practical strategies that engage your participants to be “present” and active learners. As Samuel Johnson said, “The true art of memory is the art of attention.” Please see the end of this document for additional information about memory.

There are easy and specific ways to draw participants in so that they focus on the topic at hand rather than on what was on their mind before they entered your session. For example, to encourage participants to remain “present” and enhance their retention, simply:

- Summarize key points frequently, and
- Ask participants to summarize what has been meaningful for them

When you use practical strategies such as these, you will be rewarded. Your session will be interactive, and participants will better be able to remember and apply what they learn. And it takes no additional effort to facilitate using knowledge about adult learning! After a while it becomes ‘second nature’.

All aspects of learning are interconnected. However, for ease of learning, you will find concepts categorized here, using two mnemonics, “PAR” and “PREPARE.”

It is useful to keep PAR in mind every time you want to convey important information to an individual or group, whether it is in a formal or informal setting. It is always helpful to go through three steps:

1. what someone already knows about the topic – **previous learning**
2. how it can relate to them – **application**
3. how they can deepen their learning – **reflection**

While the information presented is intended to support you as a facilitator, the KIDCARECANADA videos are educational. That is why we have called this a “Teaching Framework.” It is inspired by original work by Benjamin Bloom who developed an “educational taxonomy of learning.”

Most frequently, new learning builds on previous learning. An analogy used in these documents is that of a Scrabble™ board. In Scrabble™, there needs to be a foundational word. Then new words connect to the first word.

TEACHING FRAMEWORK MNEMONIC

P₃ A₁ R₁

P₃ revious Learning

A₁ pplication

R₁ eflection

A₁
P₃
P₃
L₁
I₁
C₃
A₁
T₁
I₁
O₁

P₃ R₁ E₁ V₄ I₁ O₁ U₁ S₁

L₁ E₁ A₁ R₁ N₁ I₁ N₁ G₂
E₁
F₄
L₁
E₁
C₃
T₁
I₁
O₁
N₁

Learning Outcomes

Ideally, for every session you will have desired learning outcomes or learning objectives. We recommend that you think about what you want participants to understand and be able to do by the end of your session. And you may find it effective to think about the learning outcomes/objectives for each of the three key steps in the Teaching Framework.

For example:

By the end of the section on **Previous Learning** you may want participants to be

- focused on the topic at hand
- familiar with the language they will encounter in the video
- thinking about what they already know about the topic

By the end of the section on **Application** you may want participants to

- find the material personally meaningful, i.e. they are able to make sense of it and explain it to someone else
- recognize how they can apply what they have learned in the video and discussions to their own context, as parents, educators, health professionals, service providers, policy makers etc.

By the end of the section on **Reflection** you may want participants to be able to

- think about the key messages, compare them to what they have learned from other videos and trustworthy sources of information
- summarize, analyze, evaluate and synthesize what the key learning is for them
- recognize what additional information they would like to have about the topic

PREPARE

The second mnemonic is PREPARE. It is helpful to keep this in mind whenever you are facilitating a session.

It incorporates and expands upon the three-step **Teaching Framework**, PAR.

P₃ lan

R₁ elevant (attention)

E₁ motion

P₃ revious learning (memory/recall)

A₁ pplication (personally meaningful)

R₁ eflection

E₁ xperience

P L A N

WHAT IS THIS? (THEORY)	HOW DO YOU DO IT? (PRACTICE)
<p>Thinking ahead reduces stress for the facilitator and optimizes learning for participants.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think through every aspect of the session, including room preparation, promotion and relevant information about your participants. When possible, visit the venue you will be using. • Prepare all of the resources. • Time each segment of your session. • Refer to the facilitation guide and the detailed agenda documents. • Create a detailed agenda that incorporates the resources and timing. • Ensure the technology you will need is available and that you have a back-up plan in case it fails. • Involve a co-facilitator or other helper, when possible. • Practise before your session.
<p>Participants pick up on the facilitator's emotional state. When they feel the facilitator is comfortable and happy in that role, the participants can relax and focus on learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look after your personal needs – ensure you are rested, fed and have time to BREATHE before your session (10 deep and slow belly breaths will enable you to move into the para-sympathetic nervous system and control anxiety.) • Write out your “learning objectives/ outcomes”. What do you want participants to understand and be able to do because of this session?

WHAT IS THIS? (THEORY)	HOW DO YOU DO IT? (PRACTICE)
<p>“Primacy/recency” People retain best what they hear first and last.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan a strong opening statement that summarizes the key message you want participants to understand and retain. • Plan the conclusion to your session so that you have an inspiring parting message for participants.
<p>Adults learn and function best with “optimal” stress. Too little, and there is low motivation; too much and we are paralyzed and unable to think clearly.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When a facilitator knows that preparation has been thorough, the facilitator can think clearly and focus on the participants’ needs. A little nervousness is normal, and even helpful.

RELEVANT

WHAT IS THIS? (THEORY)	HOW DO YOU DO IT? (PRACTICE)
<p>New learning needs to be personally relevant to learners. When content is relevant to the lives of participants, they will be attentive. Only then will they make the effort to make the learning personally meaningful, an important step for learning to be lasting. This is sometimes referred to as “constructing” learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an introductory exercise that enables you to learn something about the participants and enables the participants to learn about each other. See our Learning Guide for suggestions about Introductions and Icebreakers. • Provide opportunities for participants to work cooperatively in pairs or groups so that they get to further know each other.
<p>Learning is a social and individual process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For sessions with large numbers of participants, provide learning opportunities for individuals and groups. • Establish a safe and friendly atmosphere. This will be a wise investment. Your participants will be able to focus on the content and be more likely to actively participate, help each other, and attend future sessions. • During the session, when giving examples, refer back to information participants shared during introductions to make your comments relevant to their lives. Be careful not to put anyone “on the spot”.

WHAT IS THIS? (THEORY)	HOW DO YOU DO IT? (PRACTICE)
<p>Many adult learners are concerned about their ability to “do well.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reassure participants that new information may make more sense when they are home and watching the videos again on their own. • Explain that there are many ways to be a parent – each family is different and babies are generally prepared to grow up in the family they are born into.
<p>People learn in different ways and at different rates.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain that there will not be a quiz!
<p>Adult learners don’t want to “do something wrong.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It can be reassuring for many adult learners to know that this is a relaxed learning environment.
<p>Adult learners most often like to have an overview of what they are going to do and what is expected of them.</p> <p>Caution: if you put times in your agenda, this can cause stress for some participants who may be focused more on keeping time than the content of your session. As well, an experienced facilitator may intentionally choose to modify the agenda in order to benefit from the “teachable moment.” That is why many facilitators prepare a version of the agenda for participants that does not include the times.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a “cognitive map” (outline/ agenda) for participants so they can see what the “terrain” is going to be. (Your Facilitation Guide suggests that you should post the agenda.) • In your outline include breaks and “housekeeping” information, such as where the bathrooms are, and if participants may get up during the session to get something to drink or eat etc.
<p>People learn best when they are teaching or explaining – <i>When you explain, you retain.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give participants the opportunity to explain, in their own words, what they have observed in the video or learned.

WHAT IS THIS? (THEORY)	HOW DO YOU DO IT? (PRACTICE)
<p>Adult learners care about their comfort!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In your invitation to participants suggest they bring “layered” clothing to avoid being too warm or too cool. • During the session, check with participants that the room temperature and lighting work for them and explain and apologize if you are unable to adjust these to meet the needs of all participants.
<p>Brains disengage from time to time. The brain frequently shifts its focus between external events and internal memories and interests. It is natural for some participants (especially tired ones) to drift off – don’t take this personally.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide frequent summaries of key comments. These can be made by the facilitator (if time is short) or the participants. A facilitator may say, “We’ve just heard that babies learn the richest vocabulary by listening to parents speaking to other adults. Now we are going to see how parents change the way they speak to their child.” • Provide variety and choice in learning experiences. • Vary the session by sometimes asking questions, sometimes giving information and showing the video.
<p>The mind can pay conscious attention to only one train of thought at a time. This is known as the “Cocktail Party Effect.” (You may be speaking with someone when you overhear someone saying your name in a different part of the room. You turn your attention to them and stop listening to the person you are speaking with.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid asking participants to read and listen at the same time.

WHAT IS THIS? (THEORY)	HOW DO YOU DO IT? (PRACTICE)
<p>It is a myth that people can multi-task – brains jump back and forth between tasks, fairly inefficiently.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When there is writing for people to read, ensure everyone has time to read it. Or you may read it out loud.
<p>Learning involves our entire physiology – we need to move the body to move the mind.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some easy ways to enable participants to move: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Be receptive to participants who need to sometimes stand or move around. This is especially helpful for a longer workshop or session. * In the middle of a session, for variety, ask a question and ask participants to turn and talk to their neighbour or write a response on a sticky note and then stand and post it to a flip chart. * Ask questions where the entire group can respond by a show of hands. (See “questioning” in the Facilitation Guide.) * For a longer session/workshop, create deliberate opportunities for participants to move. * Caution: Keep in mind the needs of parents with infants – moving might be an inconvenience for them. The goal is to enhance the learning experience of your participants, not to make it more difficult, so choosing appropriate ways for participants to move will be a judgment call.

E M O T I O N

WHAT IS THIS? (THEORY)	HOW DO YOU DO IT? (PRACTICE)
<p>Just like babies, adults learn best when they feel safe. If learners think they are “under attack” or being challenged, they can ‘down-shift’ and not even hear what is being said.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to every comment respectfully.
<p>The mind is like a parachute ... it only works when it's open.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a safe atmosphere. Only then will minds be open.
<p>Learning involves both our thoughts (cognition) and our feelings (emotions).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize contributions, especially from those who are reluctant to speak out. • Validate participants by repeating their names when possible, e.g. “As Susan said,...” • Gently coach for additional information: “Why do you think that is?” • In a longer session, where appropriate, capture the comments in writing for all to see.
<p>Recognize that power differences exist in a group.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer back to comments made by a participant who needs to be encouraged to speak out. • Encourage responses with eye contact, pleasant facial expressions, nodding. • Choose your questions carefully, then WAIT for participants to answer.

WHAT IS THIS? (THEORY)	HOW DO YOU DO IT? (PRACTICE)
<p>Inclusivity enhances learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to make each participant feel welcome and valued. • Choose examples carefully. EQUALLY include able-bodied people and people with disabilities, people with different sexual orientations and cultural backgrounds. • Circulate physically in all parts of the room to indicate that you are trying to reach all learners (if you have a large group).
<p>The brain does not separate cognitive from emotional and the emotional always “wins” (unless you are trained to overcome this).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a balanced learning experience. Tell stories or have the participants tell stories and when possible, have fun.
<p>Emotion is a double-edged sword – too little emotion and your participants may not remember the key message. But too much emotion interferes with memory.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link learning to a strong (but not too strong) emotion. The greater the emotion, the more vivid the memory. However, unless you are a trained therapist, avoid asking questions that could touch on painful memories or experiences. • A moving or humorous anecdote will help participants remember the point you’re making.
<p>The brain is more emotional than rational. Otherwise, no one would buy lottery tickets!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information in KIDCARECANADA videos is informed by evidence and has been reviewed by experts in the field. • If a participant offers information whose validity you are unsure of, thank the participant and diplomatically explain your viewpoint and how you will follow up. E.g. “Thank you, that is interesting. I’m unaware of this research and will check it out.”

PREVIOUS LEARNING

NOTE: by the end of the section on “Previous Learning” you may want participants to be

- focused on the topic at hand
- familiar with the language they will encounter in the video
- thinking about what they already know about the topic

WHAT IS THIS? (THEORY)	HOW DO YOU DO IT? (PRACTICE)
<p>Previous learning is the ideal starting place. People learn best when new learning is connected to previous learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an opportunity for participants to recall what they already know about the subject.
<p>Participants learn when they are mentally present and have focused attention.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give participants the opportunity to warm up their minds and focus on the topic at hand rather than what they were thinking about when they walked in the door. • Ask questions, often “Yes/no” or “closed” questions that include concepts and topics related to the video you will be showing.
<p>Learning takes place when the learner makes connections in his/her brain. Help your participants make connections in their brains.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak about keywords from the video to give familiarity with the language and concepts they will see and hear. Then, when participants view the video they will more easily be able to link the content to the language previously heard and more likely to retain the key messages.
<p>Avoid overloading with too much information (it will get lost).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check for understanding of definitions and objectives before moving to the “application” level. • Use questions that give participants a chance to think about what has been discussed.

A P P L I C A T I O N

Note: by the end of the section on “Application” you may want participants to

- find the material personally meaningful, i.e. they are able to make sense of it and explain it to someone else
- recognize how they can apply what they have learned in the video and
- discussions to their own context, as parents, educators, health professionals, service providers, policy makers etc.

WHAT IS THIS? (THEORY)	HOW DO YOU DO IT? (PRACTICE)
<p>This is the second step in the teaching framework.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask, “What is something you know about __?__ and something you would like to know?” This question is helpful at every stage of the teaching framework. At the Previous Learning level it enables participants to recall what they already know about the topic. At the Application level it enables them, to think about how new learning relates to them. At the Reflection level it encourages them to question what they know and don’t know.
<p>Give participants the opportunity to “construct” their learning. When people apply knowledge to a new context they “construct” learning. This is related to making it personally relevant and meaningful.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask questions that help participants link new material from the videos, or the session, to their own experience.
<p>When people link new learning to their own lives they are able to make sense of the new learning and it becomes meaningful. In turn, this increases the chances of retention of new learning. The opposite is true. If learning is not relevant and meaningful it is not likely to be retained.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for participants to reflect on their own situations and explain how the new learning relates to them. • Encourage participants to explain in their own words what they have learned and what they will change because of this new learning.

REFLECTION

Note: by the end of the section on “Reflection” you may want participants to be able to

- think about the key messages, compare them to what they have learned from other videos and trustworthy sources of information
- summarize, analyze, evaluate and synthesize what the key learning is for them
- recognize what additional information they would like to have about the topic.

WHAT IS THIS? (THEORY)	HOW DO YOU DO IT? (PRACTICE)
<p>This is the third step in the teaching framework. It is often referred to as “higher order learning” as it involves analysis, synthesis and evaluation. For some people reflection does not come naturally.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage participants to reflect by asking open-ended questions that require them to think, analyze or perhaps compare new learning with something they had previously believed.
<p>Reflection can provide the key to understanding. Several KIDCARECANADA videos urge new parents to reflect on their role as parents and how it has been molded by their own life experiences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See videos by Dr. Dan Siegel, Dr. Moshe Szyf, Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn, and Dr. Gabor Maté. These health providers, researchers, teachers and writers help us understand that we are the way we are because of our life experiences and we can make sense of these – and change if we want to.

WHAT IS THIS? (THEORY)	HOW DO YOU DO IT? (PRACTICE)
<p>Reflection can enable us to improve or do things more mindfully.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When we act in a purposeful, mindful way we can be “present”. Ask participants to reflect on why being present is something to aspire to. What might be some advantages? (Anxiety is often related to worries about the future, many of which will never materialize.) • What might be the advantages of reflection for health professionals, others in caring professions, instructors, researchers, parents? • Summary comments throughout a session are helpful to everyone. Ask, “What do you think are some key points you will remember from this discussion?”

EXPERIENCE

WHAT IS THIS? (THEORY)	HOW DO YOU DO IT? (PRACTICE)
<p>If new learning cannot be attached to previous learning, it can still be retained if linked to a memorable experience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a memorable experience for participants by enabling them to be fully engaged – with their bodies, their minds and their emotions.
<p>Experience is interrelated with “Application,” “Personal Relevance,” and “Emotion.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A caution – it is important to frame the way you ask for stories you want people to relate. A facilitator cannot always foresee what participants might say, and misinformation can be conveyed. Be prepared to diplomatically and respectfully handle misinformation.
<p>The more unusual a visual image, the more likely it will be retained. (This is how people with astounding memories do it – they make humorous pictures in their mind of the items on their shopping list they want to remember. Added bonus this also works well for remembering people’s names. When meeting someone new, bring up a visual image of someone else with the same name or of something that reminds you of their name, e.g. a rose for “Rose.”)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give participants opportunities to create visual images. Story-telling is ideal. Stories allow participants to create a mental image. The result is similar to that of someone having an experience. When we empathize or put ourselves in someone else’s situation it can feel like we are having the same experience. That is one reason why stories enhance memory.

WHAT IS THIS? (THEORY)	HOW DO YOU DO IT? (PRACTICE)
<p>For over 40 years researchers have been able to show that subjects can identify with 90% accuracy thousands of visual images.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the reasons KIDCARECANADA makes videos that demonstrate nurturing behaviours is so that new parents can retain the images.
<p>Music and other auditory inputs work in a similar way – to enhance memory.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some participants will recall the videos because of the music and words they hear. • Seeing and hearing together (two channels of input at the same time) increase the likelihood that viewers understand and remember the messages. • To create a learning experience for participants, use a variety of techniques – audio, visual, novelty, and surprise.

MEMORY

About memory and how it relates to facilitating with videos

The right hemisphere - the more visual - has almost unlimited retention possibilities.

- We can easily retain thousands of images
- Musical patterns assist memory.
- The images and music in KIDCARECANADA videos help participants remember key information.

Short-term memory means just that – it doesn't last!

- You can help participants retain information and transfer it to the next level of memory (working memory) if you provide a summary of the information shortly after it was discussed, provide participants with a chance to discuss it or ask questions about it.
- To help participants remember the key points from a session it is helpful to again summarize the main points, possibly in more than one way – orally and in writing.
- Encourage participants to watch the video again when they go home as it will have deeper meaning for them.
- Chunking new material helps us to retain it. By (mental) age 15 years we generally retain 7 units of information, plus or minus 2, therefore:
 - * 'Chunk' information in meaningful units of 3-5 points in a short session, 7 (maximum) in a longer session (if your participants are tired parents, stick to 2 or 3!) For example, with the "Born to Communicate" videos, "Here are 2 interesting facts about new babies, 1) they love faces; 2) they like looking at contrast – your hairline."
- Relate material to the real world and especially to your participants' lives. Bring in information from the introductions or the ice-breaker. If the material is not relevant, participants won't remember it.
- Allow time for participants to process/repeat/re-use the information. It becomes meaningful when participants can explain it in their own words.
- Repetition – in various forms – helps us retain information. In the KIDCARECANADA videos key points are intentionally made several times in each video – by different experts and parents.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE NEUROSCIENCE OF LEARNING

One of the goals of KIDCARECANADA is to help families learn to nurture their babies so that their children develop socially and emotionally.

As mentioned in the Facilitation Guide, Facilitators are leaders who model behaviour. Being knowledgeable about Emotional Intelligence can help every aspect of life including adult learning.

Major descriptors of E.I. include:

1. **Self-awareness** – Knowing your feelings and using them to make good decisions.
2. **Self-control** – Being able to manage distressing moods well and control impulses.
3. **Optimism** – Being hopeful and motivated when you have setbacks. Having goals and working toward them.
4. **Empathy** – Knowing what people around you are feeling (being able to read body language.) Being able to put oneself in another's shoes.
5. **Ability to delay gratification** – Being able to wait for gratification. Being able to set goals and work for them.
6. **Social Skill** – Getting along with others. Managing emotions in relationships.

CONCLUSION

Everything related to teaching and learning can be summarized in these two sentences:

- New learning needs to be connected to something we already know.
or
- We need to have a memorable experience.

Based on original work by Estelle Paget for Northern Medical Health and the University of British Columbia

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DISCLAIMER

The content of KIDCARECANADA videos is informed by current research and shared by experts in the field. It should not be used for diagnosing or treating, and is NOT a substitute for professional care.