

Understanding Synesthesia For Teachers

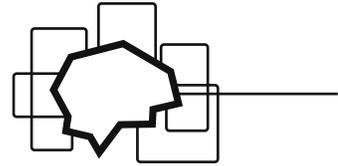
Use the following steps and suggestions to help successfully learn about your child's synesthesia and help them thrive. However, it is important to remember that these are suggestions, and seeking the help of a medical professional is always the best idea.

BELIEVE THE CHILD!

Children with synesthesia are often met by questioning, skepticism and even plain disbelief when describing synesthetic experiences to a teacher or guardian. The first and single most important step in understanding and identifying synesthesia is believing a child and their experiences.

KNOW THE BASICS OF SYNESTHESIA

Synesthesia is a neurological condition in which the stimulation of one sensory or cognitive pathway triggers the stimulation of a second pathway. For instance, perceiving letters and numbers as colors, seeing music or feeling another child's shoulder being tapped.



Found in
approximately
4%
of children

Which equates to around 1 in every 23 children, making it highly likely that a child in your classroom experiences synesthesia

Of the dozens (possibly hundreds) of forms of synesthesia that exist, some of the more common are...

ABC

GRAPHEME-COLOR

Automatic association of specific colors with letters, numbers and other characters



SEQUENCE-PERSONALITY

Ordinal sequences, such as days, months and letters are associated with a personality



SEQUENCE-SPACE

Ordinal sequences, such as days, months and letters are perceived to occupy spatial locations



MIRROR-TOUCH

Being able to feel the physical sensations of another person, like the shoulder being tapped

OTHER TYPES OF SYNESTHESIA MAY INCLUDE...

CHROMESTHESIA sound evokes the perception of color, shape or movement

AUDITORY-TACTILE sound produces a physical sensation in a part of the body

LEXICAL-GUSTATORY certain words are associated with specific tastes

MISOPHONIA sound evokes negative emotions, such as anger, sadness or anxiety

A more extensive list of synesthesia subtypes is available at [SynthesiaAwarenessDay.com](https://www.synthesiaawarenessday.com)

SOURCE: <https://www.syn toolkit.org/teacher>

KNOW HOW TO IDENTIFY SYNESTHESIA

There are simple but important cues you can look and listen for to identify a child with synesthesia.

A CHILD TELLS YOU...

They perceive numbers, letters or words in color (e.g. "7" is green, Wednesday is orange)

Certain sounds produce a smell or taste (e.g. "desk" tastes sour like a lemon)

They feel physical sensations when observing another child get injured

They perceive colors or shapes during everyday activities, like eating or playing

Hearing music causes them to experience color (e.g. the middle-C note on the piano appears as yellow)

Numbers, days or other sequences appear in a patterns in the space around the body

A CHILD IS AFFECTED BY...

Visual distractions, such as sounds causing colors or shapes that block their view of the blackboard

Visual confusion, such as confusing numbers and colors when doing performing calculations

Difficulty in the classroom environment (e.g. alphabet posters showing 'wrong' colors for them)

Pain when witnessing others in pain

Anxiety or repetitive behaviors, such as fixed repetitive routines or an urge to check things repeatedly

BENEFITS & ADVANTAGES OF SYNESTHESIA

Synesthesia has many powerful benefits and advantages in the learning environment, including...



MEMORY



CREATIVITY



PROCESSING



LITERACY



NUMERACY

CHALLENGES & DISADVANTAGES OF SYNESTHESIA

Though synesthesia has many benefits, it is often accompanied by several disadvantages, such as...

VISUAL CONFUSION

Synesthetic experiences causing confusion, such as frequently mixing up two digits or characters that a child perceives as the same color, etc.

VISUAL DISTRACTION

Other sensory triggers causing distractions to tasks, such as nearby music triggering visuals that interfere with a child's view of the blackboard, etc.

PROCESSING OVERLOAD

Discomfort or feeling overwhelmed from multiple sensory triggers perception overload

CONFLICTING INFORMATION

Seeing information that conflicts with synesthetic experiences/perception, like colors for numbers, etc.



FOR MORE RESOURCES VISIT:
SynesthesiaAwarenessDay.com

SOURCE: <https://www.syntoolkit.org/teacher>