



who is my child?

understanding children's temperaments



A Guide to Temperament



My Expectations



Write or draw two things you hope to learn about temperament in the space below:

1.

2.

A Practical Guide to Temperament

What is Temperament?

Temperament:

- Is how a person usually _____.
- Is made up of several different _____.
- Is _____ good or bad.
- Has nothing to do with _____.

Words to choose from:

temper acts neither traits



Our temperament stays pretty much the same through our lives, but we can learn to act differently. We cannot change temperaments, but we can choose how we express and use our temperament.

Why is understanding temperament important?

Adapting temperament will affect how much your child **learns**, how well he or she **behaves**, and how **happy** a life your child can have.

When your child is very young, it is up to you to make **good choices** based on your child's temperament. As your child grows, it is your job to help him learn to make good choices based on his temperament. What might be a good choice for you and your temperament might not be as good for your child. Understanding your child's temperament is very **important!**

Why Do I Need To Know About Temperament?



- You can provide _____ that work with your child's temperament and that he can enjoy.
- You can _____ her to try activities for which her temperament is best suited.
- You can understand how you and your child are _____.
- You can guide and discipline your child in _____ ways that match his temperament.
- You can better help him plan for his _____.
- You can help _____ or caregivers understand her basic nature so they can help her learn best.
- You can know what activities and environment will help him _____.

Words to choose from:

encourage
positive

teachers
activities

alike and different
learn

future



temperament

Can Temperament be Changed?



A person can't change a child's temperament, but a child can be influenced by others to make choices to behave or react in other ways.

Who and what influences your child's temperament? Write or draw your answers in the space below.

-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Remember: Temperament affects how your child learns, plays, makes friends and shows love. It doesn't predict exactly how your child will turn out, but rather predicts ways your child will most likely react, feel, behave and learn.

Get to know your child's temperament. Learn to talk to him and how to structure his world in ways that he can best grow and develop.

Identify areas that your child's temperament might affect:

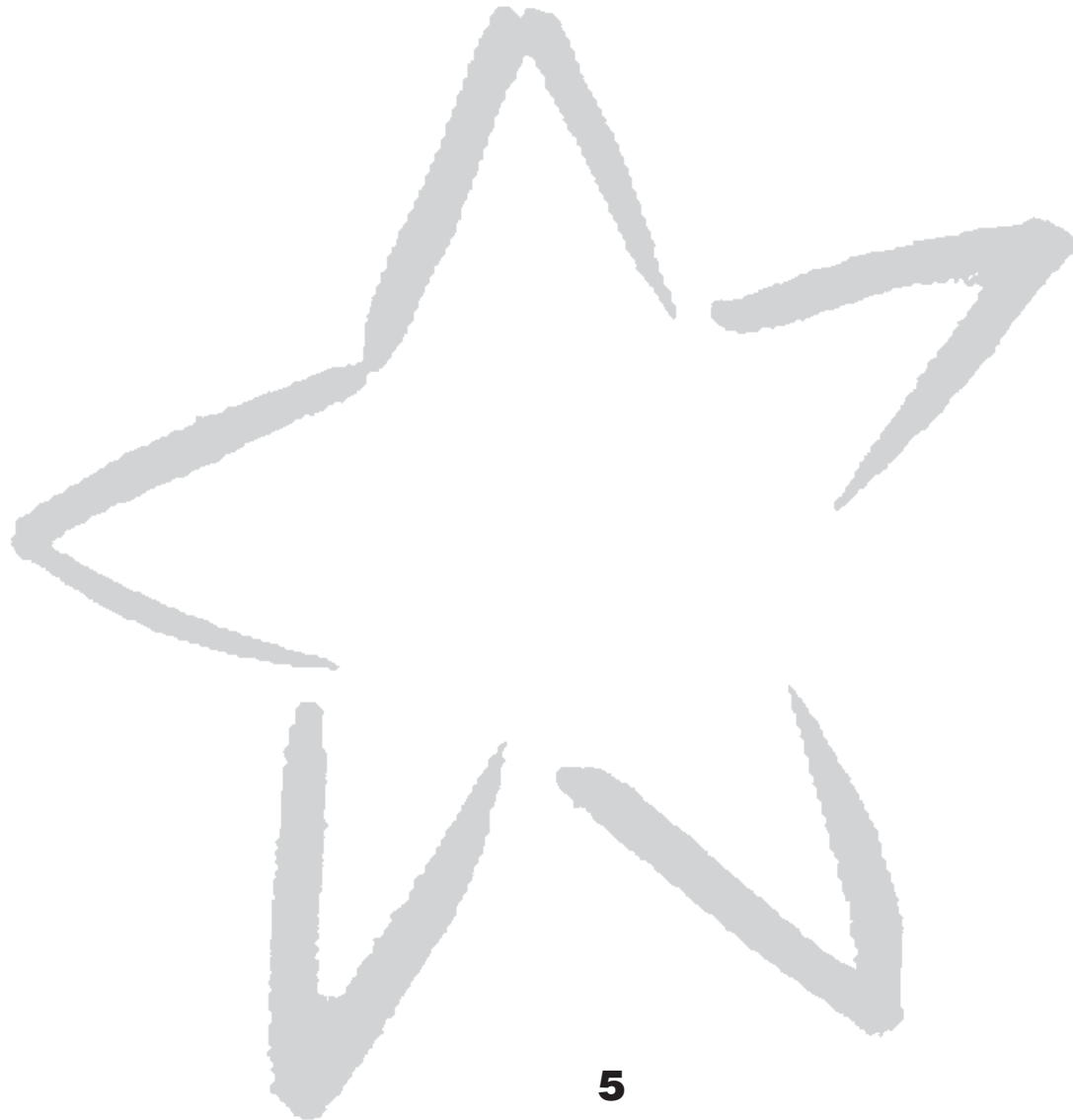
- Getting along with people
- Success in school
- Being happy

You can help him learn to adapt his temperament and his world!

What Does Your Child Love to Do?



Draw a picture of your child doing an activity he or she enjoys.



The Traits of Temperament



Everyone fits somewhere in all of the Traits of Temperament categories.

Each person might be very much one way, just a little bit another way, and sometimes a little of both. The important thing is to notice the way your child behaves most of the time.

Sometimes people label traits as bad or wrong and unfairly label a child with those traits. But every kind of temperament trait can be used in good ways if we learn to make good choices.

The Traits of Temperament are:

- Activity Level
- Sensitivity to Senses
- Awareness of Feelings
- Strength of Expression
- Persistence
- Distractibility
- Ability to Change
- Need for Physical Routine
- Usual Mood

 traits

Temperament Traits ACTIVITY LEVEL



Ask yourself: How active is my child?

Is my child always moving or usually sitting still? Is there a lot of jumping around at our house, or more quiet and calm playing? What happens when she has to sit still for a long time? What happens when she has to be up and around for a long time?

A Child Who Is Very Active:

- Needs an outlet for her energy.
- Can't sit still or quiet for long periods.
- Can be seen as able to do things.
- May be accident prone.

A Child Who Is Less Active:

- May take more time to finish things.
- Can have physical problems, like being overweight.
- Often can sit still and listen in school.

Think about your child's temperament. Circle each of the words that you think describes your child. If you want, write in other words that also may describe your child.

Lively
Restless

Slow
Quiet

Hyper
A handful

Idle
Calm



traits

Temperament Traits

SENSITIVITY TO SENSES



Ask yourself: How sensitive is my child to light, smells, sounds and touching?

What happens if there is a loud noise in our house? How does my child react if there is a bright light nearby? What happens when he eats something that has a new taste? How does he react when I hug or touch her? If there is a bad smell nearby, does he notice?

A Child Who Is Sensitive to Senses:

- May become fussy if there are loud noises or bright lights.
- Learns by seeing, touching, and using all of her senses.
- May be cuddly and sometimes clingy.

A Child Who Is Less Sensitive to Senses:

- Often is not interested in hugging or touching.
- Enjoys brighter lights and louder music.
- May sleep through noise and lights.

Think about your child's temperament. Circle each of the words that you think describes your child. If you want, write in other words that may also describe your child.

Sensitive
Unaware

Nervous
Cuddly

Artistic
Touchy-feely

Clingy
Overreacting



senses

Temperament Traits

AWARENESS OF FEELINGS



Ask yourself: How aware is my child of feelings and emotions?

Can she tell me what she is feeling? When someone else is sad or hurt, does she notice and seem concerned about what that person is feeling? Does she act mad when she is probably really sad or scared? Does she try to comfort others who are upset?

A Child Who Is Aware of Feelings:

- Can be very caring and sympathetic to others.
- Can use words to tell how she feels.
- Might act on feelings instead of thinking things through.

A Child Who Is Unaware of Feelings:

- May not know he upset someone or why.
- Can act angry instead of sad or hurt.
- Is often more interested in the facts than how people feel.

Think about your child's temperament. Circle each of the words that you think describes your child. If you want, write in other words that also may describe your child.

Kind
Uncaring

Tough
Sweet

Sensitive
Selfish

Thoughtful
Precise



feelings

Temperament Traits

STRENGTH OF EXPRESSION



Ask yourself: How strongly does my child express feelings, wants and opinions?

Do I have to guess what he is thinking? Does he sometimes get overlooked or bossed around by other people? Does he like to tell others what to do and how to do it? What happens when he doesn't like something or someone? What happens when he wants something?

A Child Who Is Very Expressive:

- May yell or cry over small things.
- May have trouble taking turns or letting other children choose games.
- Can be good at talking you into things.

A Child Who Is Not So Expressive:

- Might be seen as an underachiever.
- May get pushed around by other children.
- May be calmer and more cooperative.

Think about your child's temperament. Circle each of the words that you think describes your child. If you want, write in other words that also may describe your child.

Dramatic
Overreacting

Calm
Passive

Bossy
Persuasive

Gentle
Meek



expression

Temperament Traits PERSISTENCE



Ask yourself: How does my child stick with and complete a task?

Will she sit and do one thing until she is done? Does she start something and then move on to something else right in the middle? What happens if I ask her to stop doing something? Will she stay with something even if it is not easy, or does she give up?

A Child Who Is Very Persistent:

- Might have trouble taking “no” for an answer or stopping.
- Will stick with something until it is done.
- Is often considered stubborn.
- Usually does well in school.

A Child Who Is Less Persistent:

- May have trouble finishing things.
- Can do more than one thing at a time.
- May give up on toys or tasks that are too complicated or uninteresting.

Think about your child’s temperament. Circle each of the words that you think describes your child. If you want, write in other words that also may describe your child.

Stubborn
Determined

Flexible
Stick-to-it

Unchangeable
Doesn’t give up

Willful
Helpful



persistence

Temperament Traits

DISTRACTIBILITY



Ask yourself: How does my child pay attention?

Does he stop what he's doing often? What happens if there is a sudden noise while he is doing something? When he is fussy, can I get him to quickly think of something else, such as a toy?

A Child Who Is More Focused:

- Can complete tasks more easily.
- May be unaware of danger.
- May learn quickly.
- May not hear when you call.

A Child Who Is Easily Distracted:

- May have trouble finishing things.
- May be able to do several things at once.
- Can easily notice even small changes.

Think about your child's temperament. Circle each of the words that you think describes your child. If you want, write in other words that also may describe your child.

Focused
Impulsive

Careful
Precise

Sharp
Easily sidetracked

Inattentive
Observant



distractibility

Temperament Traits

ABILITY TO ACCEPT CHANGE



Ask yourself: How easily does my child accept changes?

What would happen if she had to go to new childcare or someone new were to watch her? Is she friendly with new children? What would happen if we moved to a new house or apartment? If everything in her room were moved around, would she be upset?

A Child Who Enjoys Change:

- May wander off if not watched in a store or crowd.
- Likes to explore new places.
- Will easily meet and accept new people.
- May become bored with the same things.

A Child Who Prefers The Familiar:

- Becomes shy with new people and places.
- Likes her toys, room and teachers to stay the same.
- Needs more time to deal with change.

Think about your child's temperament. Circle each of the words that you think describes your child. If you want, write in other words that also may describe your child.

Friendly
Adaptable

Cautious
Shy

Outgoing
Adventurous

Inflexible
Fearful



change

Temperament Traits NEED FOR PHYSICAL ROUTINE



Ask yourself: How much routine does my child need?

Does he like to do the same things at the same times everyday? What would happen if he had to go to bed earlier or later?
Does he have a favorite cup or plate? Does he prefer to eat the same things? Do I need to change his diapers at the same times?

A Child Who Prefers Physical Routines:

- Usually will go to bed or eat at the same time everyday.
- May have a favorite toy or cup.
- Can get upset when the day doesn't go as usual.

A Child Who Likes Variety in Physical Routines:

- Has varying needs for food or sleep.
- Enjoys doing things differently.
- May not notice small changes in the day.

Think about your child's temperament. Circle each of the words that you think describes your child. If you want, write in other words that also may describe your child.

Orderly
Fixed

Easily bored
Unpredictable

Like clockwork
Consistent

Impulsive
Flexible



routine

Temperament Traits

USUAL MOOD



Ask yourself: What is my child's mood most of the time?

Does she laugh or smile a lot? Does she usually see the positive or negative in things that happen? Does she usually seem serious? When things go wrong, is she able to shrug off disappointment? Does she play happily with others or does she prefer to play alone?

A Child Who Is Usually in a Happy Mood:

- Makes friends easily.
- May act happy even when sad.
- Might not know how to act when serious things happens.

A Child Who Is Usually Serious:

- May have a harder time having fun.
- Can be more studious and learn more easily.
- May be seen as unhappy or having problems when he does not.

A Child Who Is Usually Less Positive:

- Might have trouble keeping friends.
- May become sad or frustrated easily.
- Can be more realistic about things.

Think about your child's temperament. Circle each of the words that you think describes your child. If you want, write in other words that also may describe your child.

Cheerful
Playful

Reserved
Lively

Negative
Somber

Unhappy
Serious



mood

Now What Do I Do?



Remember, children need to learn to adapt their world and their temperament.

Ask yourself: What can I do to help her world – at home, at childcare and other places we go – fit better with her temperament?

Look around your house and other places where your child spends a lot of time. You will notice ways that you can make small changes that will help your child.

Ask yourself: What do we already have at home – such as toys or games – that I can use to help him learn to adapt his world? How can I help him learn to get along with others?

Helping your child and his world fit together better isn't about money or buying things. It's just about being sensitive to the things that make your own child special.

Your goal is not only to fit his world to be more helpful to your child, but also to help your child get along best in the world where he lives.

My Child's World

How would you describe your child's world?

Use words, phrases or pictures to describe your child's world.

Friends, Family and Home

How colorful is your child's room?

What is the noise level in your home?

What are her siblings like?

Does the family keep a routine schedule?



Learning, Childcare and School

What is the environment like at his childcare or school?

How is it different from home?

Does she respond to pictures or to singing or talking?

Does she like you to talk to him?

Activities and Television

What kind of games does she play?

Does TV hold her attention or does she walk away?

Does she have time to play outside?

Guidance and Discipline

Is it hard to keep her busy?

Does she get bored easily?

Does she have trouble sitting still?

What does she like to do when she is tired?



Childcare and Temperament

Many children spend most of the day in childcare. Because childcare is such a big part of your child's life, it is important that you think about your child's temperament and the childcare he attends.

The most important thing you can do is talk to your child's caregiver.

- Explain your child's temperament and the ways in which you know he learns and interacts with other children. You know your child best, and it is important that you share what you know with his caregiver.
- Ask your child's caregiver how he seems to be feeling during the day, what kinds of activities he seems to like best and how he behaves with the other children.
- Talk about how you can both work together to make your child's time in childcare the best it can be for her.

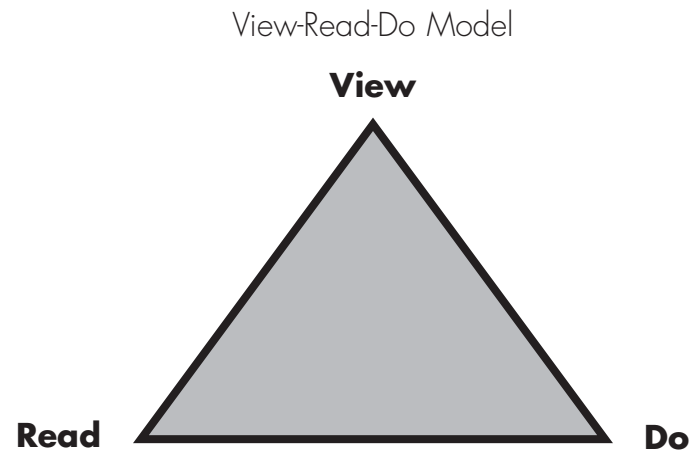
When choosing new childcare, think about what type of environment will be best for your child's temperament.

- Will he do best in a larger group of children or a smaller group?
- Will he need lots of activity time or more quiet time?
- Will the noise level be okay for him?
- Will a mixed age group where he is around older and younger children be best, or will he thrive better with children his age?
- Will he need lots of free time or enjoy more structure?

Tips for Working with Television

Throughout the tip sheets in the Guide to Temperament, you will notice references to television viewing habits for children. TV is a tool – and what children get from it will depend on how well it's designed and how well children are guided to use it. Watching television should not make your job harder as a parent or a caregiver!

Know what your children are watching. What do they learn from these shows? Talk with them about the shows they watch. Not knowing what your children are watching is like inviting a stranger into your home (who may or may not share your same values). Balance how much time your children spend watching television. Limit viewing to 10 hours or less a week, making sure that children have plenty of other fun activities to choose from.



Follow these simple steps:

- **View** a children's show with your child that introduces and explores a topic.
- **Read** a related book that reinforces literacy or other learning skills.
- **Do** something fun and active that extends the learning and helps children practice self-expression and listening skills.

The View-Read-Do model is an educationally sound way to use television with children.



*This information is recommended by the Ready to Learn Department of PBS.

Activity Level

Tips for Working with a Child Who Is VERY ACTIVE

Friends, Family and Home

- Give her quieter activities to do.
- Play safe physical games and take walks as a family.
- Encourage her to play outside with friends under adult supervision.
- Let family members know when a baby is being held too long and needs to be put down.

Learning, Childcare and School

- Let teachers know that she is an active child.
- Ask teachers to allow her to walk around, give special jobs, etc. when your child is restless.
- Be sure outside and/or active play time is provided daily at school.
- Limit time in cribs, playpens and swings.

Activities and Television

- Limit time watching television
- Keep her busy and moving with outside time, play and chores such as putting up her toys.
- Help her learn to sit still by playing board and card games that are short.
- Provide safe floor space for baby to roll, crawl and move around.

Guidance and Discipline

- Watch her closely when she is near sharp objects or streets, or when she is climbing.
- When she is restless, have her dust furniture or run around the yard.
- Teach her how to calm down when she is overactive, such as slow breathing or walking, or rub her back.
- Discipline her by using an activity rather than time out.
- Babyproof your home to protect active children.



active

Activity Level

Tips for Working with a Child Who Is LESS ACTIVE

Friends, Family and Home

- Play quiet activities but also introduce activities that are fun and active.
- Plan family walks and bike rides, trips to the mall and other active outings.
- Play quiet activities such as board games or cards with your child.
- Plan play dates for your child and his friends to become more active.

Learning, Childcare and School

- Provide him with quieter activities such as puzzles, matching games, and playdough.
- Use childcare programs with a low child-staff ratio to ensure he gets enough attention.
- Ask teachers to balance his time between physical and nonphysical activities.
- Choose a childcare program that encourages children to play actively outdoors and indoors.

Activities and Television

- Give him art materials, small figures such as animals, and building toys.
- Limit television to less than 10 hours per week for older children, less for younger.
- Involve him in physical play activities with other children.
- Visit the playground often.
- Provide infants with interactive toys that encourage movement.

Guidance and Discipline

- Encourage him to be active but understand his need to be quiet and calm.
- Provide active chores but also calmer ones such as folding socks or setting the table.
- Require outside time or doing something active before or in exchange for TV time.
- Make time to stop and play with your baby.



active

Sensitivity to Senses

Tips for Working with a Child Who Is SENSITIVE TO SENSES

Friends, Family and Home

- Have family “group hugs” where everyone hugs together.
- Remind a child who likes touching that friends may not want to hold hands and hug.
- Use softer colors and pictures in her bedroom.
- Lower the lights, television and music in the home.

Learning, Childcare and School

- Find childcare that is quieter and calmer with fewer children, and where there is an affectionate caregiver.
- Let teachers know that a lot of noise causes her to be upset or too active.
- Encourage teachers to hug and hold her.
- Ask teachers to provide music and art activities for her.

Activities and Television

- Use soft, soothing music to comfort her.
- Limit television to avoid over-stimulating your child.
- Keep the TV and music turned down.
- Let her help you cook, smell, taste and touch the food as you prepare it.

Guidance and Discipline

- Find out what things are too much for her: noise, strong flavors, certain textures or colors.
- Give lots of holding and hugging.
- Help her find a quiet, soothing place to calm down when she is cranky.
- Seek her out and hold her when she is not being clingy.
- Say things quietly and hold her when she is overactive or upset.



senses

Sensitivity to Senses

Tips for Working with a Child Who Is LESS SENSITIVE TO SENSES

Friends, Family and Home

- Provide brighter colors in his bedroom, more pictures around the house and different music.
- Encourage quieter, calmer activities with friends.
- Make sure family members ask if they can give hugs and kisses to be sure they are wanted at the time.
- Help family not to take it personally when a baby prefers not to be held.

Learning, Childcare and School

- Choose childcare programs that have good lighting and lots of colorful pictures, toys and materials.
- Be sure that school and childcare teachers provide many art and music activities.
- Choose toys that are bright and colorful.
- Encourage teachers and friends to expose a baby to different sights, sounds and experiences.

Activities and Television

- Provide him with colorful toys, musical instruments and activities that involve light, sound and color.
- Give him a music player and a choice of songs to listen to.
- Watch the volume of television and music so that he doesn't damage his hearing.
- Provide infant toys with many textures and activities that involve all of his senses.

Guidance and Discipline

- Give lots of love with words when he doesn't want to be held and help him do the same.
- Have him stop, look around a messy area and show him what needs to be picked up.
- Point out beautiful sunsets, soft and loud music, and other things he may not notice.



senses

Awareness of Feelings

Tips for Working with a Child Who Is AWARE OF FEELINGS

Friends, Family and Home

- Be aware that adults and friends may easily hurt her feelings.
- Encourage her to tell her brothers, sisters and friends how she is feeling.
- Let her help take care of younger siblings and pets.
- Encourage her to develop friendships with children who have special needs and need extra help.

Learning, Childcare and School

- Make teachers aware that she easily gets her feelings hurt.
- Ask teachers to let her help other children who need extra help.
- Ask the teacher to check with her during the day asking how she feels about things.
- When she is upset, help her calm down before beginning a learning activity.

Activities and Television

- Involve her in group activities such as board games.
- Limit television programs that are too sad, violent or emotional.
- Talk about how people are feeling in TV shows and whether or not it is real.

Guidance and Discipline

- Use feeling words when you talk to her, such as "How do you feel about...?"
- Have her think about the good and bad of different actions before making decisions.
- Help her think through a situation and talk to someone before responding emotionally.
- Remember that when you or someone around your baby is upset, she may become upset, too.



feelings

Awareness of Feelings

Tips for Working with a Child Who Is UNAWARE OF FEELINGS

Friends, Family and Home

- When arguments occur with siblings or friends, ask him how he thinks the other child feels.
- Discuss feelings his friends might have when they are upset with him, and role play how she could talk to them.
- Talk about and name feelings with the whole family.
- Encourage him to think about his friends' feelings and their wishes when he makes plans.

Learning, Childcare and School

- Ask teachers to name his feelings when he is upset.
- Choose programs and schools that emphasize caring about others.
- Provide books and activities about how to express feelings appropriately.
- Explain to teachers that sometimes the emotion a child shows may not be his true feeling.

Activities and Television

- Play a game and have him guess feelings based on your expressions.
- When watching TV, ask him how the characters on TV might be feeling in a situation.
- Involve him in service to others, such as taking cookies to someone or making a get-well card.
- Play board games with him that involve expressing feelings and ideas.

Guidance and Discipline

- Name the feeling he is expressing. For instance, "You seem angry at Johnny" or "I can tell you are very happy right now."
- After a bad experience with someone occurs, talk about how both he and the other person must feel.
- Talk about positive feelings and identify them for him when he or others are happy.
- Recognize that he may act in anger when he is really sad or hurting.



feelings

Strength of Expression

Tips for Working with a Child Who Is VERY EXPRESSIVE

Friends, Family and Home

- Encourage her to allow other children to take the lead and make decisions sometimes.
- Allow all siblings to make choices about things.
- Provide time for her to calm down after disagreements with friends.
- Help siblings and family understand that she will often be loud and insistent.

Learning, Childcare and School

- Explain to teachers that she tends to react strongly.
- Work with teachers to develop consistent ways to handle her feelings and outbursts.
- Ask teachers to encourage activities that involve pretend play and acting things out.
- Provide learning activities such as musical instruments that allow expression.

Activities and Television

- Encourage her in organized sports or activities that teach self-discipline and control.
- Provide her with games that use dramatic expression such as charades and dramatic play.
- Talk about how people show their feelings on TV – and different ways she could show hers.
- Read books and watch TV shows about leaders and talk about their qualities and what they might have been like as children.

Guidance and Discipline

- Remind her to stop, think and then act.
- When she is intense, hold her, rub her back, have her take some deep breaths, allow time alone, or to relax.
- In an intense situation, ask her to focus on the facts, not just how she feels.
- Be careful not to overreact to a child's strong emotions. Stay calm!

expression

Strength of Expression

Tips for Working with a Child Who Is NOT SO EXPRESSIVE

Friends, Family and Home

- Be sure that he gets as much attention and recognition as more expressive children.
- Encourage friendships with others not as expressive so that he is not overshadowed.
- Make sure that family members listen and reinforce him when he does express himself.
- Allow special time at dinner for children to express feelings and thoughts.

Learning, Childcare and School

- Talk to his teacher about the need to recognize and encourage his talents.
- Ask his teacher to encourage him to express himself.
- Ask teachers to be sure to spend time with him even when he is quiet.
- If he is being bullied, ask the teacher for a meeting, and work together to help him.

Activities and Television

- Provide him with activities that are more individualized such as baking, woodworking, reading and other hobbies.
- Encourage him to have fun, be silly and laugh!
- Provide a balance of active and quieter activities.
- Be sure a baby's needs are met and a quiet baby isn't ignored.

Guidance and Discipline

- Use body language as well as words to communicate ideas, and help him do the same.
- Practice with him through pretend play how to tell people what he needs.
- Appreciate him for who he is, and don't expect him to be assertive all the time.
- Encourage him to share his feelings and ideas and to let you know if he feels ignored by you or others.

expression



Persistence

Tips for Working with a Child Who Is VERY PERSISTENT

Friends, Family and Home

- Resist family members' efforts to label her stubborn, and say that she is "persistent" instead.
- Encourage her to be flexible and willing to change activities when friends want to do other things.
- Encourage family members not to give in to her wants all the time.
- Recognize that persistent babies can be labeled as "difficult" by family.

Learning, Childcare and School

- Read picture books with more words and tell longer stories to her.
- Encourage teachers to be very specific with her about expectations.
- Parents and teachers should allow her extra time if needed to complete tasks.
- Alert teachers that she often needs some notice to be able to stop her activity and move on.

Activities and Television

- Provide her with activities that have many steps.
- Enroll her in classes and activities that she will be able to continue for a long time, such as soccer or ballet.
- Allow her to keep unfinished projects somewhere to complete after dinner, chores or other activities.
- Repeat and continue songs, games and books until he is satisfied.

Guidance and Discipline

- Be firm in your decisions so that continual attempts to get you to change your mind don't work.
- Remember she is not stubborn – just persistent – and that can be a good thing!
- Talk with her about different ways to do things.
- Meet a baby's needs as soon as possible.

persistence

Persistence

Tips for Working with a Child Who Is LESS PERSISTENT

Friends, Family and Home

- Encourage family members to be patient.
- Offer to help him and his friends complete a project, such as making a fort.
- Work on chores and activities together.
- Ask family members to respond immediately when possible to a baby's cries and needs.

Learning, Childcare and School

- Provide him with puzzles and activities that are quick, and congratulate his completion.
- Set goals with him, and establish timelines for completing steps to the goal.
- Ask teachers to encourage him to complete simple activities.
- Encourage process art, where experiencing the art materials is more important than making something specific.

Activities and Television

- Encourage short-term projects, such as short card games, simple art projects or a one-time class, so he can complete something.
- If he is watching TV, discourage changing channels constantly.
- Involve him in simple cooking activities that are fun and quick.
- Provide activities that don't have to be completed, such as blocks, Legos and dramatic props.

Guidance and Discipline

- Offer him small rewards for completing a job or chore.
- Use charts so that he can see his progress when he completes work.
- Break chores, rules and instructions into smaller steps and give them to him one at a time.
- Encourage and help him to try again when learning to walk, sit up, ride a bike, or other new skills.

persistence



Distractibility

Tips for Working with a Child Who Is VERY FOCUSED

Friends, Family and Home

- Provide her with private space to work on her activities.
- Encourage her to be flexible and willing to change activities when friends want new ones.
- Warn her ahead of time before going on a family outing or asking her to join a family activity.
- Provide pictures and toys in her crib for her to enjoy.

Learning, Childcare and School

- Ask the teacher to remind her about toileting and water breaks.
- Let teachers know that she often needs some notice to be able to stop her activity and move on.
- Read books with more complex stories to her, and ask her questions about the story and pictures.

Activities and Television

- Encourage her in a variety of activities, not just one.
- She may not hear when you call her from TV or activities, so physically touch her to get her attention.
- Provide her with puzzles and activities with more pieces and greater difficulty.

Guidance and Discipline

- If she does not respond to you, go over and touch or face her to get her attention.
- Talk with her about different ways to do things.
- Give her time to think about things before expecting answers.
- Allow extra time for babies and toddlers to eat and experiment with spoons and textures.

 **distract**

Distractibility

Tips for Working with a Child Who Is EASILY DISTRACTED

Friends, Family and Home

- Ask that family members not label him as having attention problems.
- Make sure that family members are patient with him.
- Keep mealtime and other family routines short.
- Change a baby's position and location often.

Learning, Childcare and School

- Have him complete a small part of a project, do something else, and then come back to finish.
- Reward him with breaks or other treats when he finishes each part.
- Provide him with shorter books and books with bright illustrations.
- Remind childcare providers that some babies may need extra time and breaks to finish their bottles.

Activities and Television

- Play games and encourage him in activities away from TV and in a quieter room to lessen distractions.
- Provide him with games and activities that build on his favorite way of doing things, such as using sounds, movement, or looking at things.
- Limit television, as that could decrease his ability to pay attention to other things.

Guidance and Discipline

- Compliment what he does rather than complaining about what he doesn't do.
- Give him instructions one step at a time, such as "Put the blocks in this box," rather than "Clean your room."
- Provide alternatives (quiet books and small toys) to keep him busy during situations where he will have to sit for long periods, such as religious services or appointments.



distract

Ability to Change

Tips for Working with a Child Who ENJOYS CHANGE

Friends, Family and Home

- Encourage her to keep old friendships, as well as making new ones.
- Change family jobs around often.
- Try sitting at different places at dinner and varying routines.
- Make sure family members watch her carefully in new places and on shopping trips.

Learning, Childcare and School

- Ask the teacher to observe her for boredom and offer her new challenges often.
- Offer her different times and places to play and do activities when she seems tired of the same thing.
- Provide lots of chances to explore new things of interest to her through books, trips to museums, or nonfiction television shows.
- Alert the teacher that she needs occasional changes in routine and new experiences to learn best.

Activities and Television

- Provide field trips and activities to new places and opportunities to do new things.
- Watch travel shows and history or science programs on TV and talk about them.
- Give her new craft materials, kits and projects.
- Move babies from crib to floor and to different rooms often.

Guidance and Discipline

- Watch her carefully in crowds or in potentially dangerous situations.
- Change her chores and rewards often, and suggest to her new ways to complete routine tasks.
- Change her bedtime and meal routines occasionally – one night she can sleep in a sleeping bag or have dinner on the floor like a picnic.
- Give choices for required routines, such as which pajamas to wear and different bed sheets for bedtime.

 **change**

Ability to Change

Tips for Working with a Child Who PREFERS THE FAMILIAR

Friends, Family and Home

- Help him make new friends by inviting a new child over to play.
- When pets die, or a move or change occurs, spend a lot of time talking to and reassuring him.
- Warn about changes in your home, such as redecorating, before it happens.
- For birthdays and other occasions, plan small celebrations.
- Maintain family routines as much as possible.

Learning, Childcare and School

- Introduce children to new schools and teachers slowly by visiting the new place often and staying longer with your child the first few days of school.
- Let teachers know that he needs lots of notice to prepare for change.
- Ask teachers to let him and you know ahead of time if they are planning to rearrange rooms or have visitors or go on field trips.

Activities and Television

- Watch TV shows with him in which people go on trips or to new schools and discuss the stories with him.
- Play games where he has to make choices and change what he is doing, such as card games or role play games.
- Play "What If" games and ask, "What if we went to the zoo?" "What would be fun?" "What would be scary?" "What should we take?"
- Provide baby with a blanket or stuffed animal, and keep it with her when you go places.

Guidance and Discipline

- Talk frequently about upcoming changes, trips or new people.
- Describe a new experience, what it will be like and what to expect.
- Take a familiar object with you to new places.
- Offer choices and encourage him to try new things.
- When routines are temporarily upset, reassure her that things will return to normal soon.



change

Need for Physical Routine

Tips for Working with a Child Who PREFERS PHYSICAL ROUTINES

Friends, Family and Home

- Tell family members who are caring for her what her routines are.
- Keep family routines, such as bedtimes, and warn ahead of time when they are going to change.
- Encourage friendships with children who have positive habits and routines.
- Allow baby to set her own sleep and eating routines and try to follow them.

Learning, Childcare and School

- Tell teachers what her routines are, and let them know when her routine has been upset.
- Choose a more structured childcare program where general schedules are followed.
- As much as possible, maintain the same routines at home as at childcare, including nap times, mealtimes, etc.

Activities and Television

- Provide her with activities such as board games that are more structured and follow routines. Play games such as “Charades” and pretend games that are less structured.
- Allow her some unplanned play time.
- Recognize that her favorite TV show may seem very important, and try to allow a system for that to be part of her routine.

Guidance and Discipline

- Tell her and prepare ahead if there will be changes in her routine.
- Stay aware of her bathroom routine even if you are busy.
- Bring snacks along if her meal routine may be disturbed.
- Take familiar objects on trips, such as pillows or a favorite bubble bath, and maintain routines as much as possible.



routines

Need for Physical Routine

Tips for Working with a Child Who LIKES VARIETY IN PHYSICAL ROUTINES

Friends, Family and Home

- Change up family routines occasionally, such as bedtime or household chores.
- Encourage playtimes with friends to be at the same time, such as after a nap or homework.
- Make family routines such as brushing teeth or cleaning up a game, or use songs for variety.

Learning, Childcare and School

- Tell teachers that routines are hard for him.
- Ask teachers to provide flexibility in the order of the day, such as allowing him to choose when to do certain activities.
- Share some of the same routine schedules from school at home, such as nap times or meal times.

Activities and Television

- Schedule fun activities, such as watching a favorite TV show, as a routine for him to follow.
- Encourage lessons such as piano, baseball, etc. that require routine.
- When on trips and outings, try to maintain habits such as mealtime and naps as much as possible.

Guidance and Discipline

- Provide him with a clock, watch, schedule or visible means of keeping up with time.
- Provide him with flexible routines and schedules.
- Warn him ahead of time about an upcoming routine event such as bedtime or dinner.
- Make sure that he gets adequate sleep and eats regular meals.
- An infant may have signs of hunger or sleepiness at different times.



routines

Usual Mood

Tips for Working with a Child Who Is USUALLY IN A HAPPY MOOD

Friends, Family and Home

- Ask her to help with younger siblings.
- Ask family members to not use labels, such as “always happy.”
- Introduce her to friends that need her, such as those with special needs or who are more serious.
- Point out when family members are feeling sad, and encourage sensitivity.

Learning, Childcare and School

- Don't assume that she isn't smart just because she isn't as serious.
- Ask teachers to encourage her to express all of her feelings.
- Encourage problem-solving games and activities at home and at school.

Activities and Television

- Provide her with activities that require thought, such as strategy games and activities that must be planned and completed in a series of steps.
- Encourage her in service to others.
- When a person is sad or troubled on television, ask her if she ever feels that way, and talk about how she can let people know.

Guidance and Discipline

- Let her know that people will still like her if she is unhappy or serious at times.
- Avoid labels in front of others such as “she is always happy.”
- Develop a cue such as a word or gesture that you can use to let her know that she needs to be serious about what is being discussed or what is happening.
- Let her know that sometimes everyone is unhappy and to tell you if she feels down.



Usual Mood

Tips for Working with a Child Who Is USUALLY SERIOUS

Friends, Family and Home

- Help the family to appreciate his more serious nature.
- Involve him in play groups, and encourage friendships with many children.
- Plan fun and light-hearted family activities and outings.

Learning, Childcare and School

- Ask the teacher to involve him in puppets and dramatic play.
- Read nonfiction as well as fiction and humor books to him.
- Ask the teacher to assist him in joining groups for recess and play.
- Ask teachers to make special efforts to hold and cuddle a baby.

Activities and Television

- Involve him in activities with other children.
- Read joke books and watch funny movies and talk about how fun it is to laugh.
- Provide games and materials that deal with his world and interests.
- Watch science and history shows with him on television, and discuss the show's topics.

Guidance and Discipline

- If he seems depressed, talk to him and ask him how he is feeling.
- Give him time to explain and talk about his actions.
- Let him know that you appreciate him!
- Help him learn to name his feelings by naming them for him at first.



mood

Usual Mood

Tips for Working with a Child Who Is USUALLY LESS POSITIVE

Friends, Family and Home

- Share family stories with happy endings.
- Involve her in playgroups, and encourage friendships with many children.
- Give some notice before outings to discourage negative reactions.
- Allow everyone to share good things that happened today during meals or before bedtime.

Learning, Childcare and School

- Praise her artwork, and ask her about things she enjoyed at school.
- Find books in which the characters solve problems with a positive attitude.
- Ask the teacher to assist her in developing friendships.
- Let teachers know that a baby may be fussy, and encourage them to be soothing and loving.

Activities and Television

- Involve her in fun activities with other children.
- Encourage her to play games without complaining about fairness.
- Participate with her in fun activities.
- Avoid television with sad themes and unhappy endings.

Guidance and Discipline

- Talk to her about positive, happy things in her life.
- Tell her when you see her enjoying activities and being happy.
- Let her know that you appreciate her!
- Recognize that a baby may seem crankier or smile less, and increase your efforts to cuddle and be loving.



Working With Your Child's Temperament

As you use this guide, think **CHILD** to work with your child and his temperament!

Consider the temperament of your child and describe it.

How does his temperament affect the way he acts and what he does?

Identify your own temperament and how you discipline and guide your child.

Look at how you are alike and different.

Develop ways to help him fit his temperament with his world.

 child

Action Plan

Review the temperament traits in this guide and write down how you would describe your child. Use this information to help you improve your relationship with your child and to assist your child in adapting his temperament to his world.

Name of Child _____ **Date** _____

Based on what you know now about your child's temperament, write down two things you can do to strengthen your relationship with your child.

-
-

List three ways that you and your child are alike and different.

-
-
-

How does your child's temperament affect his behavior?

-

Write down two new ideas or activities that you will use with your child based on this training.

-
-



action plan



Additional Resources on Temperament

Web sites:

Ready for Life: www.readyforlife.org

Provided by KERA public television, this site offers a wealth of resources on parenting and children.

University of North Texas Center for Parent Education: www.unt.edu/cpe

A site with resources for parents and parent educators with links to many other sites and information such as parenting book reviews.

Temperament: www.preventiveoz.org

This site offers parents of infants an opportunity to identify a child's temperament traits through an interactive questionnaire and offers information and resources.

I Am Your Child: www.iamyourchild.org

This site offers parents information about the latest brain research and what parents can do to nurture children.

PBS Ready to Learn: www.pbskids.org/readytolearn

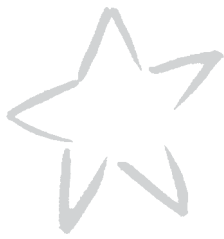
You will find information on children and learning from leading experts.

National Association for the Education of Young Children: www.naeyc.org

NAEYC is an association for professionals in early childhood education that offers resources to professionals and parents including information on accredited childcare programs and locating quality childcare.

Zero to Three: www.zerotothree.org

This organization focuses on the development of children from 0-3 and provides materials and links for parents and caregivers.



Additional Resources on Temperament

Books:

Boyd, Charles. (2000), *Different Children, Different Needs*. Multnomah, New York.

Brazelton, T. Berry. (1983), *Infants and Mothers: Differences in Development*. Dell, New York.

Carey, W. and Jablow, M. (1997), *Understanding Your Child's Temperament*. Simon and Schuster, New York.

Greenspan, Stanley. (1999), *Building Healthy Minds*. Perseus Books, New York.

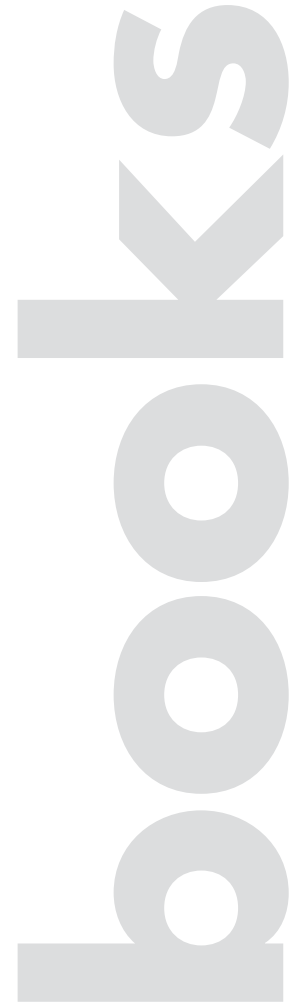
Heath, H. (2000), *Using Your Values to Raise Your Child to Be an Adult You Admire*. Parenting Press, Inc., Seattle.

Kurcinka, M. (1991), *Raising Your Spirited Child*. Harpercollins Publishers, New York.

Littauer, F. (2000). *Personality Plus for Parents: Understanding What Makes Your Child Tick*. Chosen Books, New York.

Neville, H and Johnson, D. (1998), *Temperament Tools*. Parenting Press, Inc., Seattle.

Shick, L. (1998), *Understanding Temperament: Strategies for Creating Family Harmony*. Parenting Press, Inc., Seattle.



who is my child?

When you understand your child's unique temperament, you can

- provide activities that he can enjoy and that will help him learn.
- guide and discipline your child in positive ways.
- help her get along in the world in which she lives.

From birth, each of us is our own unique person with our own ways of behaving and interacting with others. In this video you will learn about temperament, what it is and how it makes us different from one another.

As your child grows, it is your job to help him learn to make good choices based on his temperament. What you do to help her can affect how she learns, how she behaves, and ultimately, how happy a life she can have.

For information about other curriculum materials and training opportunities contact Ready for Life, 3000 Harry Hines Blvd., Dallas, Texas 75201 or visit our website at www.readyforlife.org.

Funding for Who Is My Child? was made possible by grants from the Meadows Foundation, Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, Houston Endowment, Inc., RGK Foundation, Ed Hagggar Family Foundation and the National Recreation and Park Association.

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