

What is temperament?

Temperament is a strong component of who we are. It's made up of our emotional behaviors and mood patterns. And temperament is something we're born with.

Why is it important to understand temperament?

Getting to know who your child is, even from the moment of conception helps them feel heard and understood. This prepares you to parent them better and set them up to be happy children and well-adjusted adults. Knowing your child's temperament just helps you nurture them to grow their strengths and overcome some of their challenges. Remember, there is no better or worse temperament.

Aspects of temperament.

Temperament isn't just a single trait. It's not something you can label with one word. It's a whole collection of different ways of feeling and responding. Temperament includes: Activity Level, Approach or Withdrawal, Adaptability, Intensity, Mood, Attention Span, Distractibility, and Sensory Threshold.

Three basic types of temperament.

Every child has a different pattern of characteristics but typically, they fall within three categories.

1. An **"easy"** child has a positive mood, adapts easily, and is more confident.
2. A **"slow-to-warm-up"** or shy child is cautious, hesitant, and might withdraw more in new situations. They may show anxiety when separated from you. Their emotions tend to be mild, but not always negative.
3. A **"difficult or challenging"** child tends to have big reactions and emotions, be fussier as a baby, and prone to tantrums as a toddler.

Causes of temperament.

Temperament is believed to be caused mostly by genetics. But genes aren't fate. They are more like tools a child is given. How they use those tools depends on upbringing and their own choices. And when you understand your baby's temperament you are learning how their brain works. This can help you prepare them to deal with challenges in life.

Can temperaments change?

Genes are just one influence on a person's development. Experiences and upbringing also affect us. So, while temperaments evolve, they don't change much. Once you know your baby's temperament, you can guess what their adult temperament will be. For instance, research shows that many infants who are shy grow up to be introverted as adults.

The importance of home environment.

Home environment plays a huge role in determining how happy, secure, and stable a child will be. So, knowing your child's temperament is not about changing it; it is about changing how you parent them because of it.

Know your own temperament.

We should know our own temperament since this affects how we parent. Also, we must take care that our child's temperament isn't negatively influencing how we parent.

How to shape your parenting to your child's temperament.

With the easy child, it's important to check in on them, since they won't always tell you when something is wrong. Let them know it's okay to assert their needs and boundaries. With the slow-to-warm up child, remember how sensitive they are. Make sure you prepare them for any situation that might be overwhelming. **For the more challenging child with big emotions, it's all about working with the child, not against them.** Help them name their feelings. Be present with them and model how to stay calm. **How you support your child will look different, depending on their temperament and needs.**

Parenting influences development and bonding.

Comforting, interacting, and playing with your baby helps them reach emotional milestones. Take time to interact with them and observe their emotions and behavior. This will help you learn your baby's unique characteristics so you can nurture them and build a strong and loving bond.

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