



You and Your Child's Temperament



What is temperament?

Temperament is the combination of a person's traits that direct how a person approaches the world around them.

Why is temperament important?

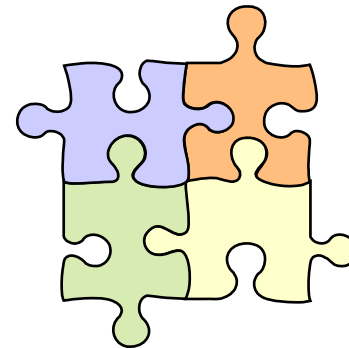
Temperament affects how you act with others

- helps you understand yourself, your partner, your children
- helps you work together effectively
- helps you to reframe and think about how you respond to your child's behaviour

What is goodness of fit?

Is the match or mismatch of temperaments between you and another person.

- Includes whether your temperaments are the same or different
- Value that you place on these different temperaments



Temperament Traits

- Activity
- Adaptability
- Approach/ First Reaction
- Distractibility
- Intensity
- Persistence
- Positivity / Mood
- Regularity/ Rhythmcity
- Sensitivity

Individual Activity

Use the temperament wheel provided to identify your temperament traits.



Sensitivity

This is the amount of sensation needed to trigger a response.

High Level

- very aware of the level of light, noise and temperature
- notices background noises

Low Level

- indifferent to changes in light, noise, temperature
- indifferent to different smells, textures and tastes

Activity



This is the amount of physical movement a person needs over a period of time and the balance between quiet and active times.

High Level

- likes to be in motion
- prefers energetic activities and pursuits
- may have a high energy level

Low Level

- content to sit quietly
- moves at leisurely pace
- prefers quieter activities and pursuits

Intensity

This is the amount of energy you use to respond to situations or people.

High Level

- big presence
- responds intensely to
- success or failure
- dramatic reactions

Low Level

- quiet presence-mellow and calm
- rarely demanding
- mild reactions

Regularity



Is the degree of regularity in everyday routines.

High Level

- very predictable and regular
- appears to have an “internal clock”

Low Level

- no predictable routine
- appears to have no “internal clock”

Adaptability

This is the ability to adapt to change and new routines.

High Level

- adjusts easily when plans change
- transitions between activities easily

Low Level

- distressed when plans change
- likes the same routine every day
- finds it difficult to make transitions between activities

Positivity



This is your reaction to people and events over time.

High Level

- optimistic
- sunny disposition
- smiles and laughs frequently

Low Level

- pessimistic
- serious
- smiles or laughs infrequently



Approach



This is your first response to new places, people, routines, activities etc.

High Level

- Loves meeting new people and situations
- Likes change

Low Level

- Slow to warm up to people and situations
- Resists changes



Persistence

This is your level of determination to continue with a task or activity in the face of challenge.

High Level

- determined, keeps at a task
- sticks with commitments

Low Level

- complains or quits if new skill does not come easily
- easily frustrated

Distractibility

This is your tendency to be distracted by a disturbance.

High Level

- attention shifts easily from one thing to another
- difficult to focus on a task
- easily interrupted by noises

Low Level

- attention is not easily shifted
- can focus and concentrate on a task
- able to tune out noise

Individual Activity

Use the second wheel to identify the traits for one of your children.



Using Temperament Traits when Parenting

Group Activity

Read the scenario in your group.

Discuss what strategies you might suggest to help the parent in the scenario.

Scenario A

Paul has two children, 4 yr old Brandon who always seems to be an outgoing, cheerful boy who is always smiling. As a baby he was easygoing, did not mind when his routine was changed. He adjusted his schedule on the weekend and liked to sleep in.

Paul also has a three month old baby girl Jessica. Jessica has been a fussy baby right from birth. She is easily upset by loud noises, bright lights, or the tags on her clothes. She is very regular about her eating and sleeping schedule and seems to have this internal clock.

What strategies would work best for a child with Brandon's temperament traits?

What strategies would work best for a child with Jessica's temperament traits?

Scenario B

Faz has a 3 year old daughter Raisa. He and his wife are quiet, reserved individuals, who are early risers even on the weekend.

Raisa is a loud, exuberant child, who is always busy and active. She flits from one toy to another and is constantly exploring places, things and approaching others- even when they are trying to be quiet. As parents they must be always watching Raisa and find her exhausting.

What strategies would work best for a child with Raisa's temperament traits?

Sensitivity - strategies

High Sensitivity

- teach your child to label feelings and express their feelings
- remove tags from clothing or scratchy fabrics
- prepare your child for loud, noisy situations
- plan meals with child's sensitivity considered

Low Sensitivity

- teach your child to label feelings and express their feelings
- encourage your child to try different tastes, experiences
- watch your child's cues
- teach your child to recognize fatigue, hunger

Activity - strategies

High Activity

- time for your child to burn off energy
- provide a safe play area
- teach your child how to look for risks
- allow time for transition from active to quiet activities
- acknowledge your child's efforts to sit quietly

Low Activity

- plan ahead to avoid rushing your child
- allow extra time for tasks
- find a few active activities that your child likes
- avoid criticizing their slow approach
- choose family activities

Intensity - strategies

High Intensity

- stay calm and be patient
- encourage outlets for expression
- help your child to solve problems not just react

Low Intensity

- provide lots of bonding time
teach your baby to snuggle, kiss and hug family members
- carefully monitor your child's cues
- encourage ways for your child to express emotions

Regularity - strategies

High Regularity

- comfort your child when changes occur
- inform of changes
- help your child de-stress
- provide snacks when meals are late
- try to maintain schedules

Low Regularity

- develop regular routines
- watch cues for hunger
- reframe “ nap time” to rest time
- teach your child about healthy eating on a flexible schedule

Adaptability - strategies

High Adaptability

- provide opportunities for your child to lead
- provide opportunities for new activities
- build in quiet time
- create variation in routine

Low Adaptability

- praise your child's successes
- use play as a way to introduce possible change
- use small step approach
- give warnings of changes
- maintain routines
- help your child make friends

Positivity - strategies

High Positivity

- provide opportunity to bond
- enjoy playing together
- teach to express other emotions and to react in serious situation
- teach that others react in different ways

Low Positivity

- help your child have fun be silly
- teach your child to balance work/play
- teach her to look for +s
- teach child to name feelings

Approach - strategies

High Approach

- provide a safe environment
- teach your child how to be safe
- praise your child when he avoids risky behaviour
- set clear limits

Low Approach

- support his efforts to reach out to others
- use small steps approach to help deal with shyness
- remind your child of previous successes
- teach your child polite ways to say 'no' to group activities

Persistence - strategies

High Persistence

- encourage variety in your child's play
- give firm, consistent limits
- provide a warning before a new activity

Low Persistence

- offer encouragement if you see your child is about to give up
- break big tasks into small steps
- provide a quiet place for your child to work
- praise him when he is successful

Distractibility - strategies

High Distractibility

- praise your child when he completes a task
- decrease distractions
- provide guidance and support

Low Distractibility

- provide comfort and support when you must disturb her
- provide different activities
- help your child develop a balance between focusing and stimulating activities

What if my child and I have different temperaments?

Being different makes us unique!

If you have a child with a difficult temperament try the following:

- Make small accommodations
- Shape your child's behaviour
- Ask for help from your partner
- Make time for you