

What is Temperament?

Every child is born with their own way of approaching the world.

This is called their temperament. What is *your* baby's temperament?

Here are five questions to think about:

1

How intense is your baby or child?

Some have strong and big emotional responses, while others are more easy-going.

2

How active is your baby or child?

Some enjoy moving most of the time. Others don't seek out a lot of physical activity.

3

How easily does your baby or child get frustrated?

Some become frustrated more quickly than others.

4

How does your baby or child respond to changes, like new people or new situations?

Some are fine with changes like a new babysitter or a new car seat. Others have a harder time.

5

How does your baby or child respond to sensory input—like textures or sounds?

Some notice even the smallest detail, like the seam on their socks. Others don't seem to notice loud noises. Or they enjoy sensory play like mud or fingerprint!

Your baby's temperament is how they are born.

And temperament typically does not change over time.

That's why it's important to accept your baby for who they are.



ZERO TO THREE



There is no right or wrong temperament.

But some are easier than others. An intense baby can be harder to soothe. A toddler who is shy may need more support to join a family party. Your caring responses help your child learn to cope. Your child's temperament is not your "fault." It doesn't mean you are a bad parent.

You can help.

Give your child the skills they need to help them handle situations. Prepare for things that may be hard. If your child is shy, you might arrive early to a birthday party to give them time to warm up. Or teach your toddler simple deep-breathing tips for managing big feelings. The most important thing you can do is show your child you love them and accept them!

You have a temperament, too.

If your temperament matches your baby's, it may be easy to help them explore the world. If your temperament is different from your baby's, you may need to work harder to help them. It can be hard if the way they react to the world is not the way you react. A shy mom with an outgoing baby may not like it when their baby says hi to strangers. An outgoing dad may think his shy baby is not friendly.

Be your child's champion.

Your role is not to "fix" your child's temperament. It is to guide and support them. You can help them develop coping strategies. And celebrate who they are! They thrive with your love and support.

Have more questions? Talk to your baby's healthcare provider or one of the professionals supporting your family.

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