

# Understanding Your Child's Temperament Traits

Temperament traits influence how we behave and react to people, places and situations

TEMPERAMENT TRAITS (all traits are on a scale with 2 extremes with lots of middle ground)	INFANT TRAITS (up to 12 months)	TODDLER TRAITS (1-3 years)	PRESCHOOLER TRAITS (3-5 years)	PARENTING TIP
<b>ACTIVITY LEVEL:</b> refers to how physically busy your child is  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arms and legs are always moving.</li> <li>Tries to stand in tub/splashes.</li> <li>Bounces in crib.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wants down from highchair or table often during meals.</li> <li>Always runs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feels restless after being inactive for a while.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow time for physical activity and ensure your environment is safe for exploring.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Passive in bath.</li> <li>Plays quietly in crib and falls asleep.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sits quietly on long car rides.</li> <li>Can sit and look at books for a long period of time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Takes a long time to dress.</li> <li>Eats very slowly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow extra time to finish tasks.</li> </ul>
<b>REGULARITY:</b> refers to how much your child needs a routine to be comfortable  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular sleep cycle.</li> <li>Food intake is constant.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nap times are predictable.</li> <li>Hungry at the same time each day.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Predictable periods of energy.</li> <li>Sleeps about the same amount each night.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep weekend and weekday schedules consistent if possible.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Length of nap and food intake varies.</li> <li>Bowel movements are at different times of day or not every day.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food intake varies and so does bowel movements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unpredictable periods of energy.</li> <li>Sleep schedule is never the same.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand that not everyone may be hungry at the same time.</li> </ul>
<b>DISTRACTIBILITY:</b> refers to your child's tendency to be sidetracked by other things going on  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stops feeding and looks around when the phone rings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be coaxed out of forbidden activity by being led into something else.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easily sidetracked even when engaged in a favorite activity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be aware of distractions that may get in the way of routine times like feeding.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stops crying only after dressing is finished.</li> <li>Cries until bottle is given.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seems not to hear if involved in favorite activity.</li> <li>Cries for a long time when hurt.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can look at books while television set is at a high volume.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You may need to gently touch or use other prompts to get your child's attention.</li> </ul>
<b>ADAPTABILITY:</b> refers to how long it takes your child to adjust to change over time  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accepts new foods with little reaction.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easily adjusts to the difference between weekday and weekend schedule.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easily transitions from one activity to another.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create variation in daily routines to avoid boredom.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not like to try new foods.</li> <li>Fusses and cries when left with new caretaker.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wants to eat the same foods each day.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Becomes frustrated when plans change, regardless of the reason.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare your child for change. Give your child a heads up that a change is about to occur.</li> </ul>

For more information, call Sanford Parenting Services at (605) 312-8390.

TEMPERAMENT TRAITS		INFANT TRAITS (up to 12 months)	TODDLER TRAITS (1-3 years)	PRESCHOOLER TRAITS (3-5 years)	PARENTING TIP
<b>APPROACH/ WITHDRAWAL:</b> refers to how your child initially responds to new things	Approaching  Withdrawing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not scared of new people.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcomes new activities and novel toys.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Doesn't mind a change in the schedule or meeting new people.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Balance the need to explore with the need for safe boundaries.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cries and whimpers at strangers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is cautious when trying a new activity or game. Might stand and watch before joining.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Warms up slowly to new friends.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow plenty of time to become comfortable with new activities and not be forceful.</li> </ul>
<b>PERSISTENCE:</b> refers to the length of time your child will spend on a task and your child's ability to stay with the task through frustrations	Persistent  Non Persistent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Persistently tries to get a toy that is out of reach. Does not give up easily.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Works at mastering a new toy without giving up.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wants to get dressed without help even if difficult.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide warnings before a new activity or transition.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sucks pacifier for only a few minutes and spits it out.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easily moves onto a new task. Gets frustrated easily when learning a new skill.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complains or quits if a new skill does not come easily.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Break tasks into smaller segments allowing for breaks.</li> </ul>
<b>INTENSITY:</b> refers to the emotional energy level of your child's response	Intense  Mild	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greets new toy with lots of expression (positive or negative).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Throws self to floor and cries when denied a toy or snack.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Runs to bedroom and slams door when teased by sibling.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model appropriate responses rather than matching the high intense reactions.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is not fussy when sick.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Looks down and remains silent when given a firm parental "No".</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not comment when reprimanded.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the mild child gets as much attention as a more expressive child.</li> </ul>
<b>SENSITIVITY:</b> refers to how easily your child is disturbed by changes in the environment such as lights, sounds and touch	High Reactive  Low Reactive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refuses a new food with a different texture.</li> <li>Cries when diaper is wet.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Irritated by tags and seams in clothing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bothered by certain noises, or reacts to a sudden change in temperature.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acknowledge sensitivity to taste, texture and smells of foods and plan meals accordingly.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eats everything.</li> <li>Not bothered by wet or soiled diapers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not bothered by physical discomfort like tight clothing or immunizations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not bothered by certain noises, little or no reaction to sudden changes in temperature.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a variety of sensory opportunities through art, music, cooking, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>MOOD:</b> refers to your child's general tendency to have a positive and outgoing or a quiet and thoughtful response	Positive  Negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plays and splashes in bath. Smiles at everyone.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Smiles and laughs often.</li> <li>Upbeat.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has a sunny, happy-go-lucky disposition.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help your happy-go-lucky child to express fear or anger and know that it's okay to express those emotions.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cries when taken from tub.</li> <li>Often has a serious expression.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has a serious expression and laughs very little.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Often appears deep in thought.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Don't confuse seriousness with being sad. Support being playful and silly.</li> </ul>