



RATE YOUR OWN TEMPERAMENT

Think about each of the temperament traits listed below and how you would rate your own temperament. If you are a high activity level person, circle a 4 or 5 at the high end of the line. If you have a moderate activity level circle a number near the middle of the line. If you have a low activity level, circle a 1 or 2 at the low end of the line. Do this for each characteristic of temperament.

	High		Moderate		Low
Activity Level (high energy vs. calm)	⑤	④	③	②	①
Rhythmicity (rhythm and regularity of daily habits)	⑤	④	③	②	①
Approach/ Withdrawal (response to anything new or different)	⑤	④	③	②	①
Adaptability (to changes)	⑤	④	③	②	①
Intensity (emotional responses)	⑤	④	③	②	①
Mood (cheerful vs. cranky)	⑤	④	③	②	①
Persistence (ability to stick with an activity)	⑤	④	③	②	①
Distractibility (focus and concentration)	⑤	④	③	②	①
Sensory Threshold (sensitivity to sensory stimulation)	⑤	④	③	②	①



Handout 2 — TEMPERAMENT SCENARIO CARDS

Activity level - High



Delia is a very slow moving child. She does everything slowly. The thing that she does most slowly is eat. She is usually the only one left at the table long after everyone else has gotten their mats for rest time. How do you feel around her? How do you think she feels around you?

Activity level - Low

You have a new child in your group. His name is Jayden and he is a whirlwind.

He is always on the move. How do you feel around him? How do you think he feels around you?



Rhythmicity - High

You have a child in your care who is very irregular in his habits. Sometimes right after you have cleaned up the snack table, Ethan comes to you and says, "I'm hungry!"



He rarely naps at rest time, but sometimes he is so exhausted that he falls asleep at the lunch table. How do you feel about him? How do you think he feels about you?

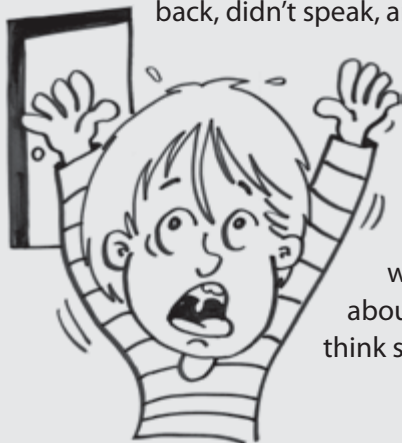
Rhythmicity - Low

You have a child in your care who is very regular in her habits. While you keep a routine in your child care, it is far from military. There are times when you might decide to have lunch 30 minutes late if the children find a bug and want to talk about it with you. Most of the children can handle this change in the routine, but Emma likes to have everything happen on time. She's been known to have temper tantrums when there's a change in the routine. How do you feel about her? How do you think she feels about you?



Approach/ Withdrawal - High

You like change, variety and new situations. When Mia came to your child care, she hung back, didn't speak, and just watched. You tried to get her to be part of classroom activities but she refused to do any more than just watch the others at play and work. How do you feel about Mia? How do you think she feels about you?

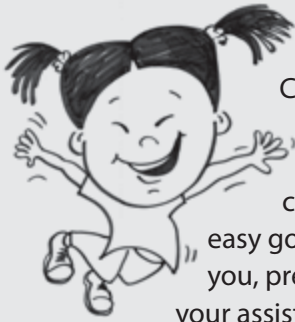


Approach/ Withdrawal - Low

You have worked with preschoolers for the past 2 years. The director of your child care facility just came to you and asked if you will work this year with the school-age children. It usually takes time for you to get adjusted to changes, but you need to start working with the school-age youngsters on Monday morning since there was a big, unexpected increase in enrollment. How are you feeling? How do you think your director might be feeling about you?



TEMPERAMENT SCENARIO CARDS



Intensity - High

Children love you. You are exciting and they would follow you anywhere. You have a new child in your group who is very easy going. Isabella doesn't come to you, preferring instead to go to Ashley, your assistant teacher. Most people like Isabella but you can't explain why you don't enjoy being around her. How are you feeling? How do you think Isabella feels about you?

Intensity - Low

Jacob never comes quietly into a room. He always needs to make a grand entrance. He is loud and passionate about everything. It doesn't matter if he was hit on the head or if he found a hair on this shirt, he reacts the same way for all situations – strongly. How do you feel about Jacob? How do you think he might feel about you?



Mood - High



You describe yourself as a cheerful person and most people seem to enjoy being around you. Your co-worker is not one of those people. She seems to always be in a negative, down-in-the-dumps mood. How do you feel about her? How do you think she feels about you?

Mood - Low

Your co-worker is relentlessly chipper. She is so talkative that all you want to do when you see her is to go back to bed. It's hard for you to get along with "Miss Happiness"! How do you feel about her? How do you think she feels about you?



Persistence and Attention Span - High



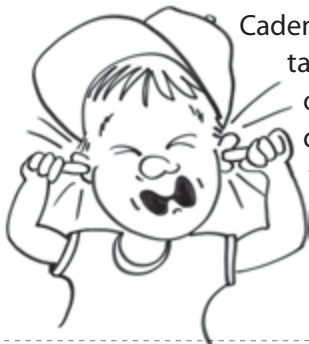
Aidan cannot sit for circle time or anything else! The other children in your group will sit and listen for 15 minutes or more but Aidan doesn't sit for more than a few seconds at a time. How do you feel about Aidan? How do you think Aidan feels about you?

Persistence and Attention Span - Low

Ashleigh gets very involved in her projects. She can sit and work on something for 15, 20, 30, even 45 minutes! Sometimes it seems like she will never get things done and move on to something else. How do you feel about her? How do you think she feels about you?



Sensory Threshold - High



Caden hates his socks and shirts with tags bother him, too. He takes off his shoes and socks every day, even when you ask him to keep them on. How do you feel about Caden? How do you think he feels about you?

Sensory Threshold- Low

The best word you can find to describe Ava is "noisy." If she is not singing, she is shouting or just thumping around at one thing or another. She often makes so much noise it can be hard for you to hear yourself think. How do you feel about Ava? How do you think she feels about you?





WHAT'S WONDERFUL?

What's wonderful about a child who...

has a high activity level	has a low activity level
has high rhythmicity (regular daily habits)	has low rhythmicity (random daily habits)
has high approach/withdrawal (easily welcomes new people and situations)	has low approach/withdrawal (has trouble with new people and situations)
has high adaptability (adjusts easily to changes and transitions)	has low adaptability (has difficulty making changes and transitions)
has high intensity (has strong reactions (negative or positive) to situations)	has low intensity (stays calm and quiet)



What's wonderful about a child who...

<p>has high moods (is usually a positive person)</p>	<p>has low moods (has a negative or cranky outlook)</p>
<p>has high persistence and attention span (can stick with a project until it's finished)</p>	<p>has low persistence and attention span (usually gives up when a problem arises)</p>
<p>has high distractibility (gets distracted easily)</p>	<p>has low distractibility (can focus on an activity and shut out the distractions)</p>
<p>has high sensory threshold (is easily bothered by loud noises, bright lights, textures of food or fabrics)</p>	<p>has low sensory threshold (can ignore noises, lights, and things around him/her)</p>



RATE A CHILD'S TEMPERAMENT

Think about the temperament traits of a child in your care. Circle the numbers to rate this child's temperament traits.

	High		Moderate		Low
Activity Level (high energy vs. calm)	⑤	④	③	②	①
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PARENTS COUNT

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR PARENTS



Understanding your child's temperament

Every child comes into the world with his or her unique mix of temperamental characteristics. These qualities usually don't change very much

as a child grows up. Usually intense people stay intense and active children grow up to be active adults. Understanding your child's temperament is the key to sensitive and in-tune parenting.

Tuning in to your child means watching your child's temperament style and responding sensitively to it. For instance, if you have a youngster who takes a lot of time to get adjusted to a new situation, you might find that going to visit the new karate school a number of times before your child starts her classes will help this child to make a smooth adjustment. If your child has a high activity level and you must take a long car ride, planning to stop and play Frisbee at a rest stop or park can make the trip pleasant for both you and your child. If your child is highly distractible, you may need to help him to focus. You can do this by creating a study place that is quiet, and has few distractions such as pictures or windows to look out. Getting to know your child's temperament can make you a more perceptive parent.



Temperamental match up

One hidden parenting problem is the match between you and your child's temperament. For instance, if you are an outgoing person you might expect your

child to respond to the world in the same way that you do and as a result you may overwhelm your child. When you take your child to a new situation he may be reluctant to participate and you might encourage him to become involved, but to your child this encouragement feels like overpowering pressure. One of the most common mismatches in temperament is in activity levels. A child with a high activity level paired with parents with low activity levels can mean problems. Adults in this situation often find themselves exhausted and irritated by the bounding, bouncing, bubbly energy of their child. Sometimes this leads to discipline problems as parents expect their child to do quiet activities, which are often hard for high activity level children who need to be moving all the time.

One way you can show your love for your child is to tune in to these differences in temperament and take some time to think about the world from your child's perspective. What is hard for your child that you may be asking them to do?



Sarah has difficulty with change. The hardest day of the week for her was Wednesday when she participated in a gifted program at another school. Every Wednesday morning she would get butterflies in her stomach before leaving the house. Rather than withdrawing her from the gifted program, Sarah and her mom worked out a plan. In the morning before school on Wednesdays her mom would let her pack a special breakfast to eat on the bus since she found that it made her butterflies better and she also watched an episode of her favorite TV show before school. This helped her to relax and cope with the Wednesday morning stress much better. Children feel understood and respected when you take their temperament into account.

Want to learn more?

You can learn more about temperaments by reading these articles.

“How Temperament Affects Parents, Children, and Family Life,” by Barbara Keogh. GreatSchools. <http://www.greatschools.org/special-education/health/temperament-affects-parents-children-family.gs?content=941>

“Tips for handling problematic temperament traits,” by Nancy Firchow. GreatSchools. <http://www.greatschools.org/parenting/behavior-discipline/tips-for-handling-problematic-temperament-traits.gs?content=787>

“Understanding Your Child’s Temperament,” by Kathy K. Oliver. Ohio State University Extension. <http://ohioline.osu.edu/flm02/FS05.html>

“Your Child’s Temperament: Some Basics,” by Nancy Firchow. GreatSchools. <http://www.greatschools.org/special-education/health/temperament-traits.gs?content=788>

Family Coupons

A simple and inexpensive way to give your children something special is to make coupons as a present. You might surprise your child with a coupon to do something she loves to do with you. For example, give her a coupon for playing baseball or hiking together.

Children love having a parent’s undivided attention. Giving coupons for time helps children to learn that spending time together is more important than buying things. Spending time with your child is the real secret to happiness. Shared experiences give your child memories that will last long after the thrill of buying something wears off.



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College of Agricultural Sciences
Cooperative Extension

Supported and produced with funds from the Office of Child Development and Early Learning, a joint office of the Pennsylvania Departments of Education and Public Welfare and the Penn State Cooperative Extension Better Kid Care Program.

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

Penn State is committed to affirmative action, equal opportunity and the diversity of its work force.

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DID YOU KNOW...

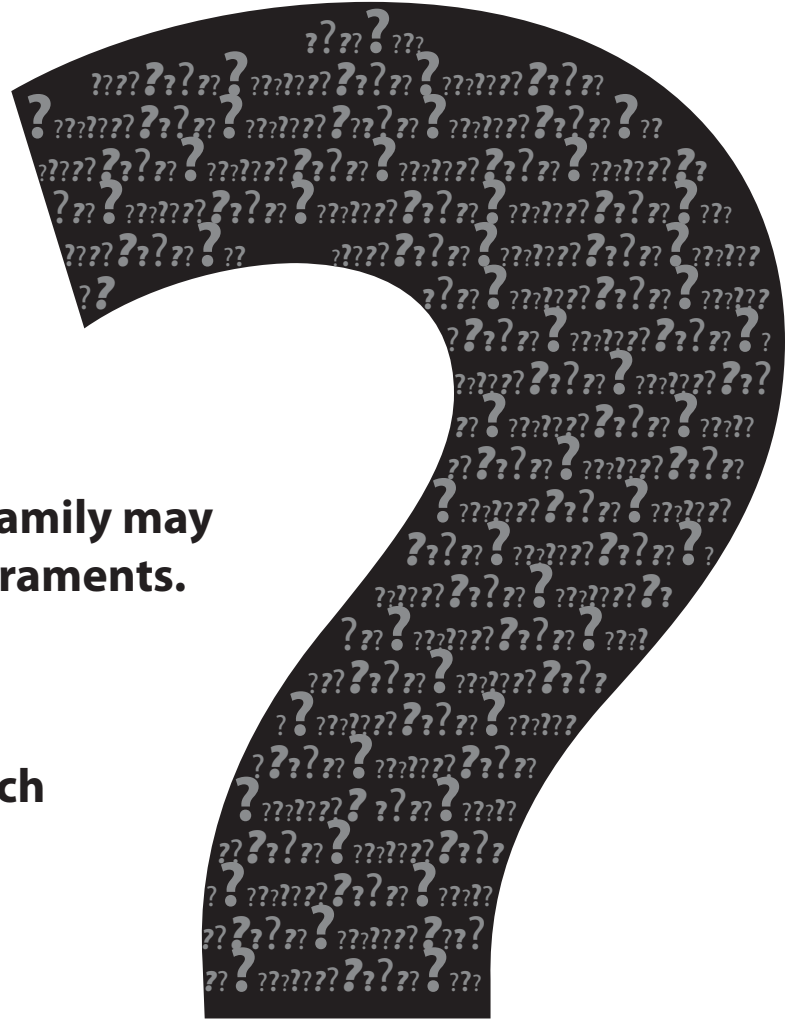
Children are born with their temperament (the way they react to people, places, and things).

Two children in the same family may each have different temperaments.

It can be difficult if your temperament doesn't match with your child's.

Learning more about your child's temperament can improve family life.

Your child's caregiver or teacher can give you more information about children's temperaments.





ACTION PLAN FOR BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH WHO CHALLENGE US

What did you learn in this professional development program that you would like to try with the children in your care?

What idea(s) will you try tomorrow with the children?

What ideas will you think about and try with the children in the future?

What steps will you need to take to put your ideas into action?



List any problems that you might run into as you put your ideas into action.

What did you learn in this workshop that you would like to share with the parents of the children in your care?

How will you share this information with parents?

What do you hope will happen as you try all your new ideas?



LEARN MORE ABOUT TEMPERAMENTS

Books to read:

Temperament Tools: Working With Your Child's Inborn Traits by Helen Neville. Seattle, WA: Parenting Press. 1997.

Raising Your Spirited Child: A Guide for Parents Whose Child Is More Intense, Sensitive, Perceptive, Persistent, Energetic by Mary Sheedy Kurcinka. New York: Harper Collins. 1998.

Articles to read:

"How Temperament Affects Parents, Children, and Family Life," by Barbara Keogh. GreatSchools. <http://www.greatschools.org/special-education/health/temperament-affects-parents-children-family.gs?content=941>

"Temperament in the classroom: Helping each child find a good fit," by Barbara Keogh. GreatSchools. <http://www.greatschools.org/special-education/support/temperament-in-the-classroom-helping-each-child-find-a-good-fit.gs?content=942>

"Tips for handling problematic temperament traits," by Nancy Firchow. GreatSchools. <http://www.greatschools.org/parenting/behavior-discipline/tips-for-handling-problematic-temperament-traits.gs?content=787>

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