



PARENT
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OTTAWA

Parenting

UNDERSTANDING YOUR CHILD'S UNIQUE TEMPERAMENT



Understanding your child's temperament is key to building a strong parent-child relationship and fostering healthy development. Here are some tips to help you navigate and nurture your child's unique temperament:

WHAT IS TEMPERAMENT?

Temperament refers to **your child's natural way of reacting to and interacting with the world**. It includes things such as how active they are, their overall mood, how easily they adapt to new situations, and how intense their feelings can be.

ACCEPTANCE IS KEY!

Embrace your child's unique temperament without trying to change it. **Adjust your approach to match who your child is and what they need.** For example, if your child is more cautious and reserved, give them time to observe and warm up to something new. And if they are sensitive to noise or crowds, minimize their exposure or time spent in busy, overstimulating environments.



OBSERVE AND LEARN.

Take the time to **observe how your child responds to different situations and stimuli** such as noise, light, textures, crowds. Notice patterns in their behavior, body rhythms and reactions. This will help you understand their temperament better. Also, **pay attention to your own temperament.** How are your needs the same or different from your child? Are you an introvert who recharges on your own or an extrovert who recharges with others? What about your child? **Our temperament affects how we experience things and how others respond to us.**

SET REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS.

Every child is different. **Celebrate their strengths and support them in areas where they may struggle.** Let them know it is okay to be exactly who they are. For example, an active child will have difficulty sitting still for long periods of time. Validate their experience, for example saying, *"Your body is telling you it's time to move. It's hard to wait for this appointment. Let's twirl our thumbs and shake our arms out while we wait."*



USE EMPATHY AND CONNECTION TO VALIDATE CHILDREN'S EMOTIONS AND TEACH THEM HEALTHY COPING STRATEGIES.

Make your home a calm oasis where your child feels safe, loved and understood. Consistent, predictable routines and clear, loving limits provide a sturdy framework for them to grow. And don't forget to take care of your needs too!

TIPS FOR SUPPORTING YOUR FEISTY, ACTIVE, MORE SPIRITED CHILD:

- **Embrace their energy.** Encourage active play and provide frequent outlets to focus their high energy.
- **Offer choices when possible, paired with clear boundaries,** set with love and consistency.
- **Create predictable routines** for meals, bedtime and other activities to help your child feel more secure.
- **Provide comfort and soothing** when your child experiences strong emotions.
- **Practice calming strategies** together to build a healthy toolbox for coping.
- **Understand** that your child may require additional support and practice to develop emotional regulation skills.
- **Be patient.** Some children have more intense reactions and may take longer to recover from being upset, scared or frustrated.
- **Plan ahead.** Prevent meltdowns by anticipating triggers, preparing the child for transitions and reducing daily stress.

TIPS FOR SUPPORTING A CAUTIOUS CHILD, WHO IS SLOWER TO ADAPT:

- **Respect their pace.** Avoid rushing, and allow them to adjust at their own pace with support as needed.
- **Offer reassurance** through gestures, body language and words of encouragement and support. **Celebrate** small steps and bravery.
- **Model and guide** them to interact with others at their own pace and in their own way. Offer them quiet breaks when the environment is overwhelming.

TIPS FOR SUPPORTING AN EASY-GOING CHILD:

- **Encourage** their exploration and socialization with others.
- **Help them understand and learn** to express their feelings and needs.
- **Support them** to learn negotiation and problem solving with peers.
- **Notice and celebrate** their interests, strengths and accomplishments.

By understanding and nurturing your child's unique temperament, you are helping them thrive and grow into their best selves. Keep celebrating their uniqueness as they are truly amazing! Connect with your child, guide them to feel safe, secure and capable, then watch them flourish.