

Temperament The Challenge of Being In Tune

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- Temperament – Early Greeks
- **Sanguine Temperament**
Humor: Blood Basic Qualities: Hot and Wet (Warm and Moist)
 - **Choleric Temperament**
Humor: Yellow Bile Basic Qualities: Hot and Dry
 - **Melancholic Temperament**
Humor: Black Bile Basic Qualities: Cold and Dry
 - **Phlegmatic Temperament**
Humor: Phlegm Basic Qualities: Cold and Wet

Temperament – Zodiac Signs



Monday's Child

**Mondays child is fair of face,
Tuesdays child is full of grace,
Wednesdays child is full of woe,
Thursdays child has far to go,
Fridays child is loving and giving,
Saturdays child works hard for his living,
And the child that is born on the Sabbath day
Is bonny and blithe, and good and gay.**
(author unknown)

What is Temperament

- *Temperament is a set of in-born traits that help to organize how a person will perceive and relate to the world around him/her. It is instrumental in the development of a child's distinct personality.*
- *We need to accept that each individual will have their set of temperamental and personality traits which are unique to them. This is not good or bad....it just is. Concern arises when a temperamental trait interferes with the healthy functioning of a child/adult that, or when a temperament creates conflict between individuals.*

What Is Temperament

©Alexander Thomas and Stella Chess did extensive research on the topic of temperament or 'attributes' of infants in the first 2 years of their life and reinforced the identification of 9 different traits

Video: About Temperament: Thomas and Chess
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mgXwCqzh9B8&feature=related>

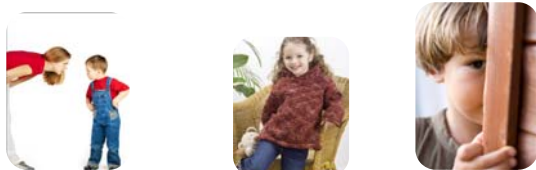
What Is Temperament

Nine Characteristics of Temperament (Thomas & Chess)

1. Activity Level
2. Regularity/Rhythmicity
3. Approach/Withdrawal/First Reactions
4. Adaptability
5. Sensory Threshold/Sensitivity
6. Intensity of Reaction
7. Mood
8. Distractibility
9. Attention Span/Persistence

Three Large Categories

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- Thomas and Chess identified 3 large categories of children
 - The Difficult Child (Spirited)
 - The Easy Child (Adaptable)
 - The Slow to Warm Up or Shy Child (Withdrawn)



The Difficult Child

- ⊙ Is irregular and has unpredictable routines
- ⊙ Is low in approach, withdrawing from novelty
- ⊙ Is slow to adapt
- ⊙ Is intense in reactions
- ⊙ Displays a lot of negative moods

• Landy 2002

• Video: [Difficult Child](#)

• <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cNkp4QF3we8>



The Easy Child

- ⊙ Is regular and has predictable routines
- ⊙ Readily approaches new things
- ⊙ Easily adapts to new situations
- ⊙ Shows a mild degree of reaction
- ⊙ Is positive in mood

Landy 2002

Video: [Easy Going Child](#)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vN5fLpYbq8w&feature=related>



The Shy Child

- ⊙ Withdraws in new situations
- ⊙ Is slower to adapt
- ⊙ Is low in activity level and intensity
- ⊙ Displays negative mood often

Landy 2002

Video: [Shy Child](#)

• http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3k_cVLHEIDI&feature=related



Activity

As a child, if you were a character in Winnie the Pooh, which character is closest to your temperament:

- Eeyore shy, withdrawn, non-intrusive
- Pooh Bear friendly, helpful, planner
- Rabbit grumpy, negative, cautious
- Tigger energetic, risk taking, fun
- Piglet mediating, nurturing



6 Temperament Dimension

The 9 temperament dimension proposed by Thomas and Chess were revised by Rothbart (2005) to 6 dimensions:

1. Positive Affectivity
2. Activity Level
3. Fearfulness
4. Anger/frustration
5. Attentional orienting
6. Effortful control



Rothbart's Model

- Positive affectivity –
The extent to which a person feels enthusiastic, active and alert
- Activity level –
The persons general level of fine and gross motor motion/activity
- Fearfulness
Level of startle or distress in sudden changes

Rothbart's Model

- Anger/Frustration
How much these feelings emerge in general life activities
- Attentional orienting
Ability to focus on a single object or activity for an extended period of time
- Effortful control –
Ability to inhibit a dominant response in order to perform a subdominant response, (ability to delay reward)

Effortful Control

- Researchers have found that one of the most important temperamental characteristics is effortful control. Those children who are higher in effortful control tend to do better in school, are able to set and achieve goals, have better problem solving and social skills.

Effortful Control

One of the methods used to evaluate effortful control is through the Marshmallow Test

Video: Marshmallow Test

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QX_oy9614HQ

Temperament Chart

- The temperament chart can be a useful tool to :
 - identify temperamental traits
 - to gauge the prominence of the traits
 - to help identify potential issues with goodness of fit
 - to help identify intervention goals

Exercise

Using the Temperament Chart think about a child/parent relationship that you know well. Rate each of the temperament dimensions, (child and parent)

When finished reflect on:

1. What do you notice about the similarities and difference between the child and the parent?
2. Are those areas with the largest difference also those that create the most struggles?
3. What do you think the child is experiencing?

Temperament Chart

When using the temperament chart with an infant the intervention needs to be aimed at the parent and can involved goals such as:

1. Helping the parent to understand the infants unique temperament
2. Helping the parent to understand their own temperament
3. Helping to open a conversation about temperament and goodness of fit
4. Helping a parent to be more objective about their infant's behaviour
5. Helping the parent to identify areas which are creating stress/issues/lack of goodness of fit and move towards working on this

Goodness of Fit

One of the important concepts developed by Thomas and Chess is the notion of goodness of fit.

Goodness of fit means that the demands and expectations of people relating to the child are compatible with the child's temperament and does not increase or create conflict/challenge for the child.



Goodness of Fit

A good fit leads to higher probability of healthy relationships and healthy development overall.

A poor fit places children at risk for developing relational, behavioural and/ or emotional problems

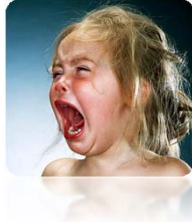
Goodness of Fit

Sensitive and effective parenting requires parents to adapt their expectations to provide a good fit with their child's temperament.

Unfortunately, in too many cases the fit is not there. For a variety of reason, including:

Goodness of Fit

- Temperament of the Child
- Temperament of the parent
- Poor environmental conditions (such as poverty)
- Mental illness of parent and/or child
- Attachment issues
- Biological issues of child and/or parent



Current Research

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fAmyt5gRd3k>
(Nathan Fox Research, University of Maryland, 2007)
Anger, Joy and Fear measurement.

Can Temperament Be changed

Temperament is a part of who we are and generally will remain with us the rest of our lives: However:

1. Many can learn to shift, especially in different roles
2. We can learn to "adjust" our temperament so it is not at the extreme
3. We can learn to be mindful of how our temperament effects others and help others understand that or give us cues when there is an issue
4. We can learn to be more tolerant of the temperament of others and not take things personally

All of these can be more possible as executive functioning strengthens.

Early Research

- A number of researchers have studied what influences the development of certain temperaments and now this relates to behavior. Jerome Kagan was one such researcher who focused on the trait of Kagan and his associates sorted children into "inhibited" and "uninhibited" children based on temperament assessment, then compared the results of their changes in heart rate. He concluded that certain areas of the brain, primarily the amygdala, were important centers in the expression and regulation of behavioral inhibition. He also found that an accurate prediction of whether a child would be social or inhibited could be determined at an early age.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CVJBzvaylH8>

Research Findings

The conditions which influence whether a child gets off to a promising or a worrisome start include:

1. The important of early life experiences, as well as the inseparable and highly interactive influences of genetics and environment on the development of the brain and the unfolding of human behaviour
2. The central role of early relationships as a source of either support and adaptation of risk and dysfunction
3. The powerful capabilities, complex emotions and essential social skills that develop during the earliest years of life
4. The capacity to increase the odds of favorable developmental outcomes through planned interventions

Shokoff & Phillips (2000) From Neurons to Neighbourhoods

- Researchers have also focused on other physiologic measures such as hydrocortisol levels and related these to social behavior in childhood. Megan Gunnar at the University of Minnesota conducted a number of studies showing that taking samples of saliva and correlating hydrocortisol levels with behavioral 'challenges' seemed to establish that levels of this 'stress hormone' may influence temperament and related social behavior.

• Recently, a study by psychiatrist Carl Schwartz at Harvard University followed up a group of "inhibited" toddlers (from a previous study by Cynthia Garcia-Coll) in pre-adolescence. He determined that a fully one-third of the inhibited group met the psychiatric criteria for Social Anxiety Disorder 10+ years later, while the virtually none of the uninhibited youngsters did. This suggests that early inhibition may play a powerful role in affecting social and behavioral adjustment years later. Neuroimaging on a smaller sample group suggested that a hyperreactive amygdala, in conjunction with failure of the prefrontal cortex to regulate it, may eventually lead to the disorder.

Research Findings

• Child temperament is more strongly related to developmental outcomes for children experiencing poor quality parenting than children experiencing better quality parenting
(Stright, Gallagher & Kelley, 2008)

Research Findings

Parents develop unique and special relationships with each of their offspring, their childrearing efforts are experienced differently by sibling because of each child's distinctive characteristics (e.g., temperament, personality, gender, age), and good parents take these characteristics into account in adapting their general childrearing practices to their specific encounters with each child

Grusec and Goodnow, 1994

Research Findings

When parents use the same child-rearing practices with different children, they evoke different reactions because of each child's temperament, age and other characteristics. These influences contribute to why, as every parent knows siblings develop unique characteristics and parental practices held to account for these differences.

Shonkoff and Phillips eds 2000

Research Findings

Mothers who reported experiencing low level of social support were more likely to have children who were insecurely attached when their infants were irritable but not when their infants were not irritable

Stright, Gallagher & Kelley, 2008



Research Finding:

Marital satisfaction/dissatisfaction during pregnancy is a predictor of child outcome after birth. (Gottman)

Video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eVDMATVzhTk>

Gottman: Raising An Emotionally Intelligent Child

Research

Gottman found that most couples experience a drop in marital contentment after a baby is born and this has impact on the child

Video: Marital contentment after baby born.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xCiyMsOFPlk&feature=related>

Research

Gottman found that how parents argued in the 3rd trimester of pregnancy was predictive of the temperament and neurological development of the child

Video: Arguing impact temperament

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CbJPaQY_1dc&feature=related

Research

The challenges associated with caring for infants with difficult temperaments may discourage parents' active engagement with their children, whereas infants with easier or more positive temperaments may elicit greater levels of involvement.
(Cabrera et al, 2000)

Research

Temperament traits, such as behavioural inhibition and negative emotionality are risk factors for psychopathology in later life
(Werner et al, 2007)

Research

◎According to researchers, mood dysregulation during pregnancy is associated with alterations in the

- in-utero environment. This in turn will influence fetal and child
- neuro-behavioural development.

(Werner et al, 2007)



Research

High level of maternal stress have been found to relate to poor behavioural outcomes in young children.

(Creasy & Jarvis, 1994: oldberg et al, 1997)

Research

Werner and her colleagues found that when women were exposed to a stressful laboratory task, the Fetal Heart Rate (FHR) predicted infant temperamental characteristics at 4 months.

Specifically, 3rd trimester fetuses who showed increased FHR rates were 11 times more likely to exhibit high motor reactivity in response to novelty at 4 months.

Research

Dr Kagan found that at 4 months a simple test could predict with great accuracy 2 distinct temperaments:

Video: Dr. Kagan: Infant Temperament
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CGjO1KwtOw>

Temperament and Culture

Temperament differences in behaviour are found in all cultures, however, individual differences in behavioural style may have different implications in other environments.

In other words, what is appropriate or healthy in one culture may not be in another

Temperament and Culture

Each society has values and beliefs that it promotes over others: individuals whose temperaments are consistent with these values are seen more positively than individuals whose traits are less consistent or conflictual.

Temperament and Culture

Drs. Super & Harkness studied temperament with 304 families in Australia, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden and U.S. They wanted to see if the model created by Thomas and Chess could be used cross culturally. They found that 8 of the 9 characteristics of the NYLS model could be reliably measured in each of these countries.

Temperament and Culture

In the United States children with higher effortful control were reported to have lower negative affectivity, while in China, higher effortful control was related to lower surgency.

This may be because in the U.S. it is more important to control negative feelings, while in China, more focus is placed on controlling ones outgoing and impulsive behaviours

Temperament and Culture

In another study done with 2 year old children, Chinese children were found to be more inhibited than Canadian children.

Also inhibition was related to more acceptance and warmth from the Chinese mothers, while for Canadian children, inhibition was negatively related to mothers' acceptance and encouragement

Temperament and Culture

Parents in different cultures may have different expectations, values and beliefs regarding their children's temperament, which in turn is reflected in their parenting and how they relate to their child.

These differences are able to be more easily identified at a cultural level. There are many of the same implications for parents within the same culture, who may hold expectations, beliefs and/or values, which accept or reject specific temperaments of their children.

Beliefs/Values/Expectation

What are examples of beliefs, values, expectations of parents which can influence how they might respond in a negative way to a child's temperament

Beliefs, Values, Expectations

- ⊙ Boys don't cry
- ⊙ Children should be seen and not heard
- ⊙ My 3 month old is trying to manipulate me with their crying
- ⊙ Spare the rod, spoil the child
- ⊙ My baby is manipulating me
- ⊙ Ignoring my baby crying will teach her to self regulate



Support for Parenting

Universal Parenting Considerations

- Consistency
- Structure/Routines
- Reward System
- Comfort/Play/Teach
- Attachment work/activities
- Following the Child's Play
- Paying attention, observing
- Authoritative Parenting Style



Specific Strategies

The specific strategies/interventions can be utilized to focus on the temperament areas which are identified as an issue.

Case Example: Activity Level

Mom is quite active and athletic. She moves quickly and is able to change from one activity to another immediately.

Her son, age 3 is low activity. He avoids physical movement and likes to be picked up, or things brought to him. He also gets tired quickly when he is physically active.

What is a strategy which Mom can utilize with her son to create better Goodness of Fit

Case Example – Activity Level

Mom is low activity and does not have a great deal of energy.
Sally, age 2 is high activity, constantly moving and switching from one activity to another. She has temper tantrums when mom does not respond to her quickly enough.

What is a strategy that mom can use with Sally?

Case Example – Recovery Time

Father, Bill, has slow recovery time after he gets upset. His son, Scott, age 4, recovers very quickly when upset and seeks nurturing from his parent, however Bill would walk away from Scott as he is still upset.

What intervention can help create goodness of fit for Bill and Scott?

Case Example – Recovery Time

Mother, Judy has very quick recovery time, but her daughter, Julia, age 3 takes a long time before she calms down. When Julia has a melt down, Judy tries everything to settle her down, treats, distraction, toys, cuddles, but nothing works and then Julia feels like a failure as a parent.

What intervention can be used to create goodness of fit?

Case Example – Positive Affect

Mom is generally positive and cheery. She encourages her child and gives lots of praise.

Max, age 4 has a more negative mood. Does not like to try new things, tends to give up easily and often states, "I can't do it" Mom does a lot of things for Max after many attempts to encourage him to do something.

What is a strategy that mom can use?

Case Example – Effortful Control

Jennifer, age 4 has little patience and is not able to wait. If mom does not let her do what she wants, Jennifer will have a meltdown. This can happen at the store and she wants to go to the pet shop first rather than wait until after mom has finished shopping.

She wants her dessert before eating her meal. If she starts to play a game with her family she never finishes as she wants to do something else that she says is more fun.

Mom and Dad tend to give in rather than create a battle that they don't feel they can win, but realize this is not helpful to their daughter.

What intervention might help create a better goodness of fit.
