

## Your Child's Temperament

All of us are born with a unique temperament, which is that our way of viewing and interacting with the world around us. Understanding both your own and your child's temperament will help you see your child as an individual and adapt your parenting style to be more effective in preventing and managing conflicts. There are generally nine different temperament traits. According to *The Preventive Ounce*, 3 of those traits are seen as most significant, followed by another 3 that come in second in significance. The traits below are grouped in descending order.

### Activity, Energy or Movement

*The amount of energy and activity your child generally has*

Scale:	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Positive:</b>	Can easily sit still			Loves to explore; great athlete	
<b>Negative:</b>	May be seen as lazy			May be labeled "hyperactive"	
<b>Strategy:</b>	Plan & encourage activity			Allow for time to cool after activity	

### Adaptability

*How easily your child can adapt to a change in routine or comfort with surprises*

Scale:	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Positive:</b>	Less likely to accept negative influences			Accepts positive influences	
<b>Negative:</b>	Seen as "difficult" by caregivers			May be easily influenced by peers	
<b>Strategy:</b>	Allow time for child to adjust to change (set alarm clock 10-15 min earlier)			Monitor negative influences as they may be easily swayed	

### Persistence or Frustration

*How easily frustrated your child gets or how long their attention span is.  
Do they give up easily at a task or refuse to give up until it is mastered?*

Scale:	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Positive:</b>	Easier to distract or leave an activity when needed			High achiever	
<b>Negative:</b>	Not as efficient at difficult tasks; gives up quickly			Ignores others when absorbed in a task	
<b>Strategy:</b>	Help them with organization; give adequate time for completion			Give plenty of warning when interruption is needed (timer)	

### Sensitivity

*How aware your child is of sounds, taste, temperature or emotions.*

Scale:	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Positive:</b>	Rarely complains			Sensitive to others	
<b>Negative:</b>	Doesn't pick up on cues; may avoid negative stimuli			May complain about clothes, lights, etc. & have difficulty sleeping or concentrating	
<b>Strategy:</b>	Help them develop awareness of surroundings			Avoid overstimulation. Help them understand how they feel and develop avoidance techniques	

### Perceptiveness or Distraction

*How easily your child is distracted by environment and thrown off course*

Scale:	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Positive:</b>	Works well in noisy, busy environment			Easy to distract when crying or upset	
<b>Negative:</b>	May not notice subtle signs from others			May have trouble staying on task and completing activities	
<b>Strategy:</b>	Don't assume child is ignoring you; make eye contact			Break tasks down into smaller steps. Give clear instructions.	

### Regularity

*How regular or predictable your child is with eating, sleeping and elimination*

Scale:	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Positive:</b>	Isn't bothered with changes (vacation, new school)			Very predictable	
<b>Negative:</b>	Unpredictable; never eats or naps at the same time			Doesn't do well when out of routine; may not enjoy travel	
<b>Strategy:</b>	Help them develop a routine			Keep on routine as able; warn child of any changes to routine	

### Intensity

*How strongly does your child react emotionally?*

Scale:	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Positive:</b>	Easy to live with			Great motivator when positive	
<b>Negative:</b>	May be ignored			Can be annoying to others	
<b>Strategy:</b>	Pay more attention to what they say; take complaints seriously			Teach them to self calm (water play, music)	

### First or Initial Reaction; Approach or Withdrawal

*What is your child's first reaction to someone or something new?*

Scale:	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Positive:</b>	Less likely to get into dangerous situations			Adjusts quickly to new situations	
<b>Negative:</b>	May avoid fun or helpful situations			Can get into dangerous situations (wander off, approach strangers)	
<b>Strategy:</b>	Prepare for new situations; don't push too hard			Monitor in dangerous settings	

### Disposition, Mood

*Your child's general mood: positive vs. negative*

Scale:	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Positive:</b>	May get more attention from caregivers if concerned			Well liked	
<b>Negative:</b>	Unpleasant to be around			May be difficult to notice true concerns	
<b>Strategy:</b>	Ignore negatives and accept child; Teach them manners			Stay aware of situations that may be troublesome for your child	