
What kind of a baby did you get?

All parents wonder what their baby will be like. Is your baby what you expected? What is your baby like? Is she sensitive to wet diapers or doesn't she seem to mind? Can she sleep pretty much anywhere, or does she do best in her own crib? Each baby is **unique**. But babies don't come with manuals, like cars do. Parents and babies must learn to figure each other out. Learning your baby's **temperament** will help you figure out what works best with your baby.

Why do babies differ in temperament?

Temperament has a biological basis and may be partly due to genetic make-up. You did not cause your baby's temperament.



What is temperament?

Temperament is the unique style of behavior your baby was born with. Babies' temperaments are not always clearly visible at birth. Certain things may cloud the picture, such as birth hormones, the effects of a difficult birth, unfinished brain development, colic, etc. However, certain temperament traits you may notice right away. For instance, you may notice your baby's activity level early on. Does your baby move around a lot when you change his diaper or does he lie fairly still? On the other hand, you may not notice your baby's persistence until he starts practicing skills like rolling over or standing.

Crying and temperament

All babies cry, but how often or how loudly your baby cries may partly depend on her temperament. For instance, babies who are more sensitive, more intense, and who take longer to adjust to changes (like getting in and out of the car seat) may cry more often and louder.

Observe your baby's emerging temperament style

By about 4 months of age your baby's temperament will become clearer. At that time you can fill out a questionnaire that will help you see your baby's unique temperament. Over the next few months, watch your baby and look for how he reacts to the people and things in his world. Many different temperament styles are possible – all of them normal.



Look for baby's temperament style in these areas:

1. Sensitivity - does baby wake easily to loud noises?
2. Activity level - does baby move around a lot while awake or sleeping?
3. Intensity - are baby's cries long and loud?
4. Adaptability - how quickly does baby adjust to new things or changes?
5. Regularity - does baby settle into a schedule easily?
6. Persistence - does baby keep practicing a new skill?
7. Soothability - how easily is baby calmed when upset?