

## What is your parenting style?

Parenting style is influenced by a number of things. For example, how you were raised, current stresses in your life, *your own temperament* and your children's temperament all influence your parenting. Are you more firm or more supportive in your parenting?

## How does temperament affect parenting?

Your temperament influences how you experience and react to your baby's behavior. For example, if you are high in intensity you may react more strongly to baby's refusal to try a new food. Research shows that parenting is also affected by your child's temperament. For instance, parents of children with more challenging temperament styles may find themselves being too firm if they have difficulty handling their child's behavior - or too permissive if they are worn out from dealing with the challenges. Learning strategies tailored to your child's temperament helps parents be more effective.

## What is your temperament?



Get to know your temperament by marking where you are on each of these scales. Think about how your temperament is similar to or different from your child's temperament.

<b><u>Sensitivity</u></b>		
Hi	←————— Med —————→	Low
<b><u>Activity level</u></b>		
Hi	←————— Med —————→	Low
<b><u>Intensity</u></b>		
Hi	←————— Med —————→	Low
<b><u>Regularity</u></b>		
Hi	←————— Med —————→	Low
<b><u>Adaptability</u></b>		
Hi	←————— Med —————→	Low
<b><u>Persistence</u></b>		
Hi	←————— Med —————→	Low
<b><u>Distractibility</u></b>		
Hi	←————— Med —————→	Low

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## *Parents' and child's temperament together*

What does a good fit look like? Is having a similar temperament helpful? Is having a different temperament problematic? The answer depends on the particular combination of traits. For example, if both you and your child are intense, you may have to work harder to keep your cool when dealing with your child's intense reactions. On the other hand, if you are both sensitive, you may better understand your child's discomfort with scratchy tags in clothes or lumps in socks. If your child is highly active and you are not a high-energy person, you may find it more challenging to keep up with your little dynamo! You will need to find outlets for your child's energy.

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## *Did you cause your child's temperament?*

No, you did nothing to cause your child's temperament. She was born with this style of behavior. Research shows that some temperament traits are partly due to genetic make-up. Temperament tends to stay pretty much the same over time, even though your child's behavior changes as she grows up.



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## *Can parents affect their child's temperament?*

The way you parent your child can influence his temperament to some degree. First, parents can have a positive influence on their child's temperament by teaching their child that they will meet him half-way: that is parents will meet his temperament needs, but also set certain expectations for his behavior. For example, research shows that highly inhibited toddlers can become less inhibited by the time they start school if parents gently introduce them to new people, places and things, rather than protect them from new experiences. Being gentle means giving their child time to "warm up" to new things gradually, while still expecting the child to try new things. Second, parents can begin to help their child learn to manage her own temperament. For example, parents can teach their active child to run in place while waiting in line. This gives the child an acceptable outlet for her energy.