
Using positive labels

When we use positive words to describe our children we feel better about ourselves as parents and better about our children.

Toddlers with temperament styles that are more challenging for parents to handle seem to attract negative labels like magnets. For example, the child who adapts slowly to changes needs transition time between activities, such as stopping play to come eat dinner. If asked to come immediately, this child will balk at having to change activities **too quickly**. Parents may see this child as being "stubborn." Negative labels hide the positive side of your child's temperament. Using positive labels helps you see your child's strengths, and builds her self-esteem.



Being an advocate for your child!

Sometimes other people who don't know about temperament may use negative labels to describe your child. If this happens, you can perform some magic by turning negative labels into positive ones. For example, if grandma describes your toddler as noisy and wild you can say, "Yes, he really is dramatic and full of life." This will help others see your child in a more positive light.

Of course, temperament is not an excuse for misbehavior. Parents need to set rules and limits for their child's behavior. But parents also need to provide a "good fit" between their expectations and children's temperament to promote healthy development.

LABELS		
<u>Negative</u>	→	<u>Positive</u>
Stubborn		Determined
Picky		Particular
Demanding		Goal Oriented
Bossy		Leader
Loud		Dramatic
Wild		Full of life
Fearful		Cautious



Temperament and personality

Temperament and personality are not the same, but temperament influences a child's developing personality. For example, a highly active child may learn to enjoy and pursue sports, while a more sensitive, shy child may prefer activities like reading and taking walks. Personality includes motivations or why we do something and is influenced by our abilities (what we can do). Temperament is how we do something or the style of behavior.

Gender and temperament

Gender differences in temperament are not common in infancy, but by preschool age girls tend to be more sociable and boys more active. Researchers think parents may treat girls and boys differently, which encourages these differences in behavioral style.

What is your toddler's temperament?

Different parenting issues come up as your toddler's horizons expand and her drive for independence grows. Find out your toddler's temperament by going to **The Preventive Ounce** website at: www.preventiveoz.org. Click on **Image of Your Child**. You can fill out a questionnaire for your 18-month-old toddler and immediately receive back:

- a temperament profile that shows your toddler's temperament.
- a forecast of likely-to-occur behaviors.
- strategies for handling likely-to-occur behaviors that are tailored to your child's temperament.

Research shows that parents who understand their toddler's temperament have an easier time handling behaviors that are challenging, but normal for their child.

