

---

## *Low adjustability child*

Adjustability includes three temperament traits:

Adaptability refers to how easily a child adjusts to changes, including transitions, intrusions, limits, unfulfilled expectations, and delays in plans. Children who are low in adaptability dislike sudden changes or surprises because they need more time to adapt.

Approach/withdrawal refers to how a child reacts to anything new. A child who initially withdraws from new people, places or things, will approach only after she feels comfortable or things seem familiar. She may hang back at the edge of a new playgroup or reject new foods.

Frustration tolerance refers to how long a child will stick with a task, especially when there are obstacles. A child who is low in frustration tolerance seldom persists at a task for long, but may show "high negative persistence" - repeatedly testing limits.

Children who are low in adjustability may be low in one or more of these three traits.

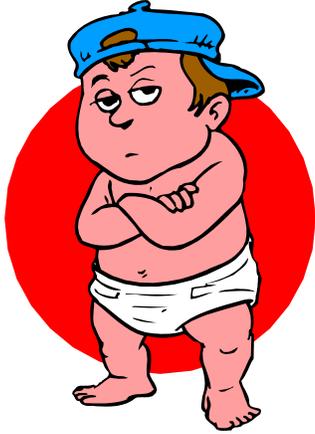


---

## *High adjustability child*

Children who are high in adjustability adapt easily to changes, approach new people, places and things, and are persistent in completing tasks. If fast adjusting children are also low in energy level, they tend to be less assertive - have less need to be in control. This makes them more vulnerable to being "victimized" by children who are higher in energy, or lower in adjustability. However, fast adjusting, low energy children are usually easy to parent. This child follows the rules and obeys parents' requests - and may, in fact, take on the role of the "good child" in the family. This doesn't allow much of a chance for this child to express his needs and desires. Parents need to make an effort to ask this child his opinion about things.

## *Low adjustability and Low-energy Child*



### **Behaviors:**

**Mealtime** - rejects new foods until familiar. Likes same old foods day after day. Wants food she expected, not fixed in different way. Likes to control eating - no bib, feed self.

**Nap or Bedtime** - has difficulty making transition from waking to sleeping. Dislikes being alone to sleep - may be fearful of dark room. May "drag feet" getting ready for bed.

**Social development** - hangs back in new groups at first. Bossy with other children - likes to be in control to reduce surprises. Prefers small groups, children the same age.

**Learning** - learns by watching. Develops small motor skills earlier. May resist directions. May not finish learning tasks.

**Assertiveness** - like to be in control, to reduce number of changes to which he must adjust. Tests limits often. May quietly resist finishing tasks by dragging feet.

**Separations** - difficulty separating from parents. Likes parent (trusted adult) nearby if frustrations occur. Dislikes uncertainty of new caregiver, new preschool, etc.

**Toilet training** - fearful of toilet, flushing. Resists if pushed. May train later.

### **Parenting Strategies:**

- Introduce new things many times - repetition.
- Divide new experiences into smaller parts - segmentation - making several trips to visit new school, meet new teacher, try new playground.
- Allow time for child to observe before joining in.
- Tell child about changes ahead of time.
- Provide plenty of transition time between activities.
- Set clear, consistent limits.
- Offer choices to give child some control.
- Provide routines for child, especially around bedtime.
- Keep number of changes each day to a minimum.
- Provide rest periods each day to recharge child's adaptability.
- Teach child how to share control with other children.
- Provide reassurance during separations, never "sneak out"
- If child tests limits, give "time out" in another room.
- Break larger tasks into smaller parts.
- Give lots of encouragement for each part of a task a child completes.
- Set up reward system (ahead of time) for completing a task.