



Division of Children's Health
and Perinatal Services

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Getting to know your baby.

TEMPERAMENT TIP SHEET

Temperament Tip Sheet

In these first weeks, you've had a chance to see how your baby responds to their new home. Maybe your baby is quiet and sleepy or alert and active. Some babies need more physical contact, some less. You're probably beginning to get a good idea of your child's personality.

Babies are born with different personalities just as they're born to be different sizes and shapes. No two have ever been exactly the same. Our job as parents is to help the child take that personality and build on it to become the best person they can be.

Parenting teaches us as much about ourselves as it does about our children. If we are aware of our own feelings and responses, we'll be better parents.

- Understand that your child is an individual.
- Get to know your baby.
- Let the baby get to know you.
- Enjoy your differences!

Types of Difference

Activity level: From their first days on earth, babies differ in their activity levels, even within a family. One child might be always "on-the-go", while a sibling would prefer to watch what's going on.

Adaptability: A new situation presents a challenge for anyone, and a baby's world is full of new situations. While many babies tolerate novelty well, others become easily disturbed and need more comforting. As they grow older, people refer to the first as "outgoing" and the other as "shy."

Focus: Some children are always open to the world around them. They move from one thing to another easily and are easy to distract. Others can more easily tune out their environment and amuse themselves for long periods of time.

Sensitivity: For a sensitive child, noises seem louder, lights are brighter, and that wool sweater is scratchier. You'll never talk them out of this — it's just the way they see and feel the world.