



Feisty, Lively, and Tenacious! Working with Difficult Temperament Traits to Help All Children Succeed.



Course Objectives:

- Identify one child's unique temperament makeup
- Pinpoint a strategy to individualize and adapt care to help that child succeed in your care



Every child is a different kind of flower. All together, they make this world a beautiful garden.
-Rumi

Temperament Overview:

- ✓ Temperament is simply reaction to stimuli
- ✓ Each person has a temperament that is wired from birth
- ✓ Temperament is one piece of the puzzle
- ✓ Temperament traits are consistent over ages, times, and settings (not development)
- ✓ Traits can be more challenging depending on the caregiver's temperament
- ✓ Power struggles can occur when you have a clash of traits
- ✓ Every child can succeed! But, they will need a "good fit".

*The "Fit" refers to when demands and expectations are compatible with the child's temperament and abilities

**"Goodness/poorness of fit" was a strong predictor of social skills & negative behaviors



Case Study: What is the trait that is not fitting well for Laura in Ms. Neil's Childcare?

Intense reactions

High persistence

High activity

Very irregular

Negative first reaction

Twenty-month-old Laura just began care in Ms. Neil's family childcare home. Ms. Neil is having difficulty integrating Laura into her program. Laura's

- **schedule is unpredictable,**
- **she becomes tired or hungry at different times each day,** and
- **she always seems to want to run, climb, and jump on everything.** Laura also
- **gets extremely upset**
- **when it is time to transition** from outdoor play to lunch, or
- **when Ms. Neil interrupts an activity in which Laura is engaged.** It is not uncommon for her to **tantrum for 10 minutes or more** at these times. Ms. Neil has had many years of experience working with young children, and attributes Laura's lack of a consistent schedule to her recent enrollment and need to get used to the program. She is also struggling with the fact that
- **her (Ms. Neil's) favorite activities—quiet games, book reading, and sensory experiences—are ones that Laura doesn't seem to enjoy.** After several weeks of observing little change in Laura's behaviors, Ms. Neil is frustrated.

Laura's unpredictable napping and feeding times, as well as her constant need for physical activity and intense reactions during transitions, are making responsive care for all the other children difficult. Ms. Neil meets with Laura's family, and learns that Laura's parents haven't had difficulty with the issues she describes. When she asks specifically about her schedule, her parents describe Laura as being a good eater and sleeper, but do report that she doesn't have a consistent schedule for eating or napping. They also share that Laura's need for active physical play is typically not an issue because they have a large backyard and Laura has several older siblings who often include her in their active play. Still, all of the adults are concerned about Laura's success transitioning into Ms. Neil's program, and want to find a way to help her.

Resource:

https://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/briefs/wwwb_23.pdf



- ✓ Our messages and expectations influence outcomes
- ✓ All children will thrive if they feel loved and valued as they are and learn the skills they need to succeed



**thriving
together** LLC

Developed & Presented by Raelene Ostberg, M.Ed., National Keynote Speaker & Director, Thriving Together LLC

✉ raeleneostberg@Thriving-Together.com

💻 Thriving-Together.com

Temperament Chart

Intensity of Reactions

How strong are the child's emotional reactions?



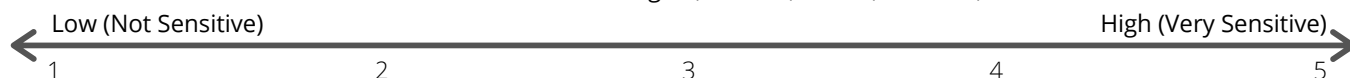
Persistence

How persistent is the child? How committed to his/her goals?



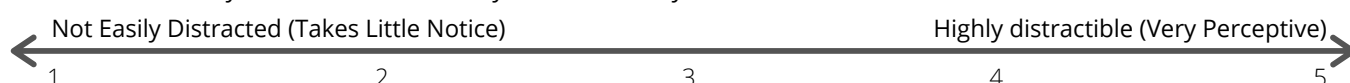
Sensitivity

How sensitive or aware is the child to sights, sounds, smells, textures, and emotions?



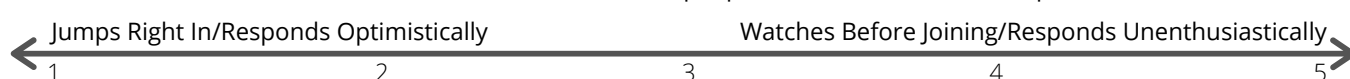
Distractibility/Perceptiveness

How easily is the child drawn away from an activity? Does the child notice details in the environment?



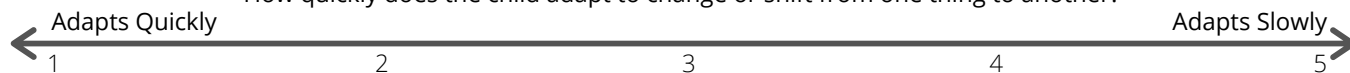
First Reaction/Initial Response (Approach/Withdrawal)

What is the child's first reaction to new people, activities, ideas, or new places?



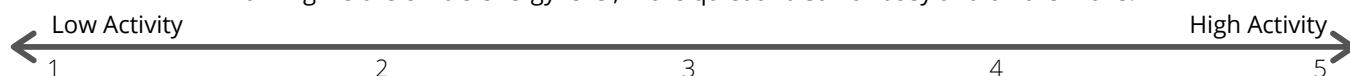
Adaptability

How quickly does the child adapt to change or shift from one thing to another?



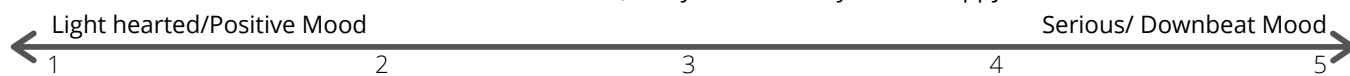
Activity Level/Energy

How high is the child's energy level; more quiet and still or busy and on the move?



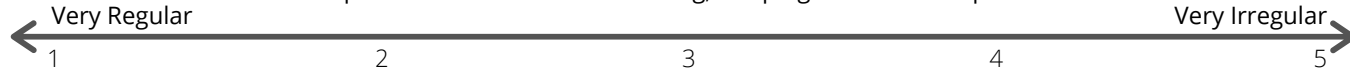
Mood

How often does the child feel serious, analytical or cranky versus happy and content?



Regularity

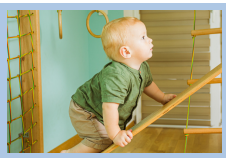
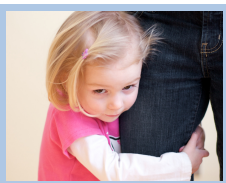
How predictable are the child's eating, sleeping & elimination patterns?



Which traits are more difficult for you to work with?



Working with Difficult Temperament Traits to Help All Children Succeed.

Temperament Trait	Triggers	Modifications to Provide a "Good Fit"
High Activity 	• Too little activity • Sitting too long • Being restrained	• Stay attuned to the signals they are getting fidgety and incorporate moving • Provide ample opportunity for physical activity before expected to sit • Give the child positive attention and praise when sitting • When needed, "prompt" the child what "to do"
High Sensitivity 	• Too much stimulation • Tags, seams, noises, smells • Other people's anger, yelling • Being too hot/cold	• Find ways to reduce stimuli in the environment • Avoid too many things planned in a day • Be attuned and/or teach the child to notice when things start to become too stimulating • Help the child identify and get a break or quiet space
High Intensity 	• Being ignored • Intensity of others • Big feelings • Fatigue and hunger • Stress	• Avoid reacting to the child with the same intensity • Read the real need and respond calmly to that need • Watch for rising tension and help them soothe and calm • Give time and space when needed
Slow to Adapt 	• Too many changes in a day • Surprises • Unexpected changes • Something different	• Help the child "warm" to new ideas, giving space and time to adapt with low pressure • Provide a predictable routine • Sing the same transition song • Use "First-then" prompts

Case Study: What is one thing Ms. Neil can do to help provide a good fit for Laura?



Your links to top resources and information to share



- **Main page with links to top resources on this topic (and ways to contact us for professional development:** <https://www.thriving-together.com/temperament>
- **Resource Blog with master list of resources and temperament information:** <https://www.thriving-together.com/post/from-timid-to-tenacious-working-with-difficult-temperament-traits-to-help-all-children-succeed>
- **Blog "Helping Children with a Feisty Temperament" (Includes "How big a Deal" Freebie:** <https://www.thriving-together.com/post/working-with-children-with-a-feisty-temperament>
- **BLOG: "Working with Persistent Temperaments":** <https://www.thriving-together.com/post/no-you-can-t-make-me-working-with-children-who-won-t-listen>



What is one takeaway? What is a strategy you will implement to help a child with a difficult temperament trait "fit" in your caregiving environment?

“Having respect for the world is when you allow people to be what they are.”
-Magda Gerber



**thriving
together** LLC

Developed & Presented by Raelene Ostberg, M.Ed. - Expert Trainer and Director, Thriving Together LLC

✉ raeleneostberg@Thriving-Together.com

🌐 [Thriving-Together.com](https://www.thriving-together.com)