Temperament and Positive Parenting

Dr. Margarita Gurri, CSP
Objectives

- What is temperament?
- Identify child’s temperament and management strategies
- Identify parent’s temperament and how that affects responses to child’s behavior
- Create a “Goodness of Fit” plan
What is Temperament?

• Is a way to explain differences between children in similar circumstances
• Influenced by genetics, biology, and environment
• Emerges in infancy and continues to influence development throughout life
• Includes patterns of behavior that illustrate differences between children
Why is Temperament Important?

Understanding temperament helps parents do the following:

• Foster activities and routines that match their child’s tendencies and personality

• Tailor discipline and behavior management strategies to the child, which may lead to greater success in modifying and improving child behavior
Nine Traits of Temperament

1. Activity level
2. Regularity
3. Adaptability
4. Approach/withdrawal
5. Physical sensitivity
6. Intensity of reactions
7. Distractibility
8. Positive or negative mood
9. Persistence
Nine Traits of Temperament

1. **Activity level** and type
2. **Regularity** of rhythms
3. **Adaptability** to change
4. **Approach/Withdrawal** to new
5. **Physical sensitivity** threshold
6. **Intensity of reactions** + and -
7. **Distractibility** with tasks
8. **Positive or negative mood**
9. **Persistence** beyond frustration
Basic Types of Temperament

- Easy / Rhythmic: 40%
- Slow to Warm Up: 15%
- Active: 10%
- Combination: 35%

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Scenario: Tom
Easy / Rhythmic Child

- Most common temperament style
- Characteristics:
  - Keeps regular routines, such as eating or napping
  - Usually adapts to new situations or activities quickly
  - Easily toilet-trained
  - Cheerful
Slow to Warm Up Child

- Also referred to as the “Cautious Child”

- Characteristics:
  - May be shy or timid or not
  - Withdraws in new situations or around strangers
  - Withdraws when pushed to join in or adapt quickly
  - May cling to parents
Active Child: active/inactive periods, small/large motor

- Also referred to as the “Feisty, Fussy, or Difficult Child”
- Characteristics:
  - Seldom holds back
  - Active
  - Intense
  - Easily distracted
  - Moody
  - Sensitive
Does Your Child do This or That?

1. Does your child like to try new things or prefer to sit back and watch?

2. Does your child fall asleep at the same time each night or a different time each night?

3. Is your child constantly moving, or does he or she tend to stay still?

4. Does your child do well in chaotic situations, or does he or she get easily distracted?
Nine Traits of Temperament

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temperament Trait</th>
<th>Temperament</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Sit to read or tv?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularity</td>
<td>Regular eating, sleeping?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptability</td>
<td>Speed of adaptation to new food, places, people?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approach/Withdrawal</td>
<td>Reaction to new ppl food, place?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical Sensitivity</td>
<td>Awareness of change in temp, noise, touch?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensity of Reactions</td>
<td>To changes in routine?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Charting Temperament Traits

- Chart your child’s temperament by placing an “X” on the scale where it best describes your child
- Chart your personal temperament by placing a “P” on the scale where it best describes you
“Goodness of Fit”

- The environment and childrearing strategies are matched to the child’s temperament
- Adults handle each child in ways that support the child’s success

➢ A “good fit” is associated with positive child outcomes, like well-being and fewer behavior problems
“Poorness of Fit”

• Demands or expectations of an environment go beyond the present abilities of the child

YRRP Website for Handouts: Temperament and Parenting

www.yellowribbon.mil/yrrp/handouts.html
A “Goodness of Fit” Plan

- Use Handouts 1 and 2
- Take an individual trait and write one way you could try to meet the child’s temperament needs for each trait
- Take an individual trait and write one way you could be a role model to your child through addressing your needs
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