

## The Nine Dimensions of Temperament

1. **Activity level.** Some babies are active. They kick a lot in the uterus before they are born, they move around a great deal in their bassinets, and as toddlers, they are nearly always running. Other babies are much less active.

2. **Rhythmicity.** Some babies have regular cycles of activity. They eat, sleep, and defecate on schedule almost from birth. Other babies are much less predictable.

3. **Approach-withdrawal.** Some babies delight in everything new; others withdraw from every new situation. The first bath makes some babies laugh and others cry; the first spoonful of cereal is gobbled up by one baby and spit out by the next.

4. **Adaptability.** Some babies adjust quickly to change; others are unhappy at every disruption of their normal routine.

5. **Intensity of reaction.** Some babies chortle when they laugh and howl when they cry. Others are much calmer, responding with a smile or a whimper.

6. **Threshold of responsiveness.** Some babies seem to sense every sight, sound, and touch. For instance, they waken at a slight noise, or turn away from a distant light. Others seem unaware even of bright lights, loud street noises, or wet diapers.

7. **Quality of mood.** Some babies seem constantly happy, smiling at almost everything. Others seem chronically unhappy: they are ready to complain at any moment.

8. **Distractibility.** All babies fuss when they are hungry, but some will stop if someone gives them a pacifier or sings them a song, while others keep fussing until they are fed. Similarly, some babies can easily be distracted from their interest in an attractive but dangerous object and diverted to a safer plaything, while others are more single-minded.

9. **Attention span.** Some babies play happily with one toy for a long time. Others quickly drop one activity for another.