



**SUGGESTIONS FOR TEMPERAMENT EXTREMES**

					POSITIVES	CHALLENGES	SUGGESTIONS
ACTIVITY LEVEL	HIGH ENERGY	Attacks life with gusto. Rarely gets bored. Almost always entertain self. Always on the move.	Can be impulsive, even reckless. Trouble finds them as much as they find trouble.	Try to anticipate: stay a few steps ahead. Provide opportunities to burn off energy. Allow a cool-down period when switching activities.			
	LOW ENERGY	Generally calm and laid back. Content to sit and work quietly for long periods of time.	May be accused of being lazy. Works at a slow pace. Moves to a “different drummer”.	Allow enough time for them to transition between tasks. Don’t rush them! Avoid criticism regarding the length of time it takes them to do something.			
RHYTHMICITY	HIGH REGULARITY	Routines such as: eating, sleeping, and elimination are well established, leading to predictable behavior and needs.	Coping skills are compromised when a child’s routine is changed.	Be prepared. Have an acceptable substitute ready to offer the child. Try to anticipate potential delays.			
	LOW REGULARITY	Can “go with the flow”. Not easily upset by changes to the daily routine.	Without clearly established patterns, it is more difficult to predict the child’s needs.	Respect the fact that your child’s patterns may vary from day to day.			
APPROACHABILITY	BOLD, QUICK TO WARM	Carefree, fearless approach to life. Enthusiastic about new people and situation. Impulsive.	Putting self at risk if the child does not consider possible dangers.	Requires extra monitoring, with a lot of reminders, and clear boundaries.			
	SLOW, HESITANT	Less likely to put self at risk. Exhibits caution.	Hesitates often, and long. May miss out on fun situations. Sometimes teased about being on the sidelines.	Help your child prepare for new situations and experiences ahead of time. Don’t force them to participate if they’re not comfortable.			
ADAPTABILITY	HIGH	Resilient; good coping skills for those unexpected situations or events.	More likely to succumb to peer pressure or other negative influences.	Keep tabs on your child: know who they are with, and what they are doing.			
	LOW	Less likely to succumb to negative influences and peer pressure.	May find difficulty with new situations, or switching from one task to another. Major changes in daily routine can be upsetting.	Strive for routine whenever possible. Prepare your child in advance if there’s likely to be a change.			



INTENSITY	HIGH	Looks out for self, makes sure his needs are met. Never over-looked or passed-by.	Gets attention, because he demands it. Can be tiresome in his demands.	Patience, patience. For yourself, and to model for your child (who may be a bit lacking in this area).
	LOW	Cruises through life, without making a lot of waves. Easy to get along with.	Easy for the child to be over-looked, fall between the cracks.	Be aware of the child’s needs. Offer help, or choices before the child requests them.
SENSORY THRESHOLD	HIGH	Highly sensitive and tuned into other’s feelings.	May be overly sensitive, and therefore over-react to normal stimuli as well as social issues.	Prepare your child for situations that you may anticipate. Respect the nature of the child.
	LOW	It takes a lot to rattle a child like this. They may sometimes seem oblivious to external stimuli.	Can contribute to social awkwardness, due to the difficulty figuring out how to interpret other people’s emotional signals.	Coach your child on “emotional literacy”—how to understand what other people may be feeling.
MOOD	HAPPY, POSITIVE	Fun to be around.	Can be less demanding, and sometimes his needs be overlooked.	Be aware; just because your child is “happy”, he may have needs that aren’t being addressed.
	SOMBER, NEGATIVE	Can be misunderstood as just “quiet” at times.	You just can’t make this child happy. The negative attitude and complaining can put people off.	Accept the fact that your child’s mood may just be hard-wired, and that you may not be able to alter it. Continue to encourage the child to look for a “brighter” side.” Do not take it personally.
DISTRACTIBILITY	HIGH	They never miss a thing! Nothing gets by them.	Hard to focus and maintain concentration.	Provide an environment that’s conducive to the learning style...limit the amount of distractions.
ATTENTION SPAN	LOW	Child can zero in on what needs to be done. Can remain focused for long periods of time	Difficulty in switching tasks, as they tend to become totally engaged in the task at hand.	Try limiting the amount of time allowed for each task. Prepare the child in advance by providing a “task schedule”.
	LONG	Often linked with high levels of achievement. Things just get done.	Can contribute to over-achieving, and, being a perfectionist.	Monitor the length of time; and the intensity to which the child is working at a task.
	SHORT	Always eager to move on; tries lots of things.	Most things are not done to a satisfactory state of completion. Difficult to address/teach new concepts to.	Keep expectations short and instructions minimal. Monitor for possible Attention Deficit Disorders.

Adapted from *The Mother of all Parenting*,  
Ann Douglas (2004)