

VIRTUAL KIT: TEMPERAMENT

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Parents, caregivers, and medical professionals alike know that infants begin to express the uniqueness of their being from birth. No two children, even those born to the same parents, are the same! One child may sleep through the night, be generally cheerful, and eat whatever you put in front of them. While his sibling doesn't like to be held, spits out anything green, and is constantly on the go! It is important to note that temperament is not black and white - it can be influenced by interactions with others, environments, situations, etc. The sibling that doesn't like to be held may cling to her parent's leg anytime she is in a new situation. As adults caring for children, we must be knowledgeable of our own temperament, along with the temperaments of the children in our care. Using this knowledge, we must then adapt our temperament to best meet the children's temperament needs, not the other way around.

In the late 1960's, many scientists attributed these behavior differences to the environmental factors present in that infant's life. In their seminal research study titled [*The Origin of Personality*](#), Thomas and Chess hypothesized that, "personality is shaped by the constant interplay of temperament and environment." (Thomas, Chess, & Birch, 1970).

The contents of this virtual kit serve two functions. First: to define temperament and explain why it is important to understand each child's temperament and second: to provide easy-to-use assessment tools to identify the temperament of children in your care. While intended primarily for classroom implementation, many of the resources are beneficial for parents.

SHOW ME NOW – I NEED IT TOMORROW

[Tips on Temperament - Zero to Three](#)

[What Works Brief - Understanding Temperaments in Infants and Toddlers](#)

[Temperament \(video\) - Zero to Three](#)

WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE? I HAVE A LITTLE MORE TIME TO READ ABOUT THIS

[Early Development and Well-Being: Temperament - Zero to Three](#)

[Infant Toddler Temperament Tool \(IT3\) - Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation](#)

[Child Temperament: How We Start to Become Ourselves \(video\)](#)

[Temperament - Understanding Behavioral Individuality](#)

[The Emotion Regulation and Temperament Laboratory - Northern Illinois University](#)

WHAT DOES THE [ECRC](#) HAVE ON THIS TOPIC?

Below are selected resources from the Early Childhood Resource Center. For additional related resources [go to the KITS Early Child Resource Center and click on ECRC catalogue](#), or call (620) 421-6550 ext. 1638 for personal assistance.

Bailey, B. (2000). *Easy to Love, Difficult to Discipline* The 7 basic skills to turning conflict into cooperation. New York William Morrow.

Denno, D., Carr, V., & Bell, S. (2010). *Addressing Challenging Behaviors in Early Childhood Settings: A Teacher's Guide* 1st Edition. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Pub. Co.

Greenspan, S. (1995). *The Challenging Child* Understanding, Raising, and Enjoying the Five "Difficult" Types of Children. Perseus.

Infants: Social & Emotional Development DVD. (2010). [DVD] Red Leaf Press.

Keogh, B. (2003). *Temperament in the Classroom: Understanding Individual Differences*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Pub. Co.

Kristal, J. (2005). *The temperament perspective: working with children's behavioral styles*. New York: Paul H. Brookes Pub. Co.

Sterling Honig, A. (2010). *Little Kids, Big Worries: Stress-Busting Tips for Early Childhood Classrooms*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Pub. Co.

Toddlers: Social & Emotional Development DVD. (2010). [DVD] Red Leaf Press.

HOW CAN I FIND TRAINING MATERIALS ON THIS TOPIC?

[Understanding Temperaments - KCCTO online course](#)

A child's temperament influences their style of interaction, but also, the way that he or she understands and experiences the world and the people in it. This course will assist you in understanding the traits of the various temperaments and how adjustments can be made in your approach or environment when working with these various temperaments.

[Children's Temperament - Successful Solutions Professional Development online course](#)

Every child possesses a certain combination of traits and qualities that make him/her unique. Understanding these traits helps child care providers develop effective discipline practices and cultivate positive relationships with the children in their care. Child care methods are most successful when they are attuned to a child's temperament.

This course discusses children's temperaments and how temperament affects behavior. It also addresses child care strategies for managing temperament and nurturing children's unique personalities.

IF YOU THOUGHT THIS KIT WAS HELPFUL, YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE...

[Early Childhood Inclusion in Child Care: Building a Foundation of Understanding Virtual Kit](#)

[Developmentally Appropriate Practices Virtual Kit](#)

[Brain Research in Early Childhood: A Primer for Caregivers and Administrators TA Packet](#)

WHAT IF I STILL NEED HELP?

You may request technical assistance from the KCCTO-KITS Infant Toddler Network Specialists by calling the KCCTO office at 800-227-3578.

EVALUATION

Please take a minute to complete a brief survey to let us know what you think about this virtual kit, and what other topics you would like to see addressed in the future:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/F6P7QBG>

REFERENCES

Allard, L. & Hunter, A. (2010). *Understanding Temperaments in Infants and Toddlers: What Works Brief*. Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning.

Thomas, A., Chess, S., & Birch, H. (1970). The Origin of Personality. *Scientific American*, pp 102-109.