

BORN LEARNING: BITS OF UNDERSTANDING

In His Shoes . . .

Choosing a Parenting Style That Fits

Are you wearing the right shoes? We don't mean whether you chose your new heels over your sneakers today, but whether the steps you take as a parent are in sync with your child's temperament - the way he thinks, behaves, and reacts - as he walks through life.

Sizing It Up ...

Each child is born with his own temperamental style and personality. Throughout his childhood and beyond, his temperament will influence not only the way others treat him but also the way he acts and reacts to his world and the people around him (including you).

To better understand your child's temperament, it helps of first think about your own. There are many different traits that contribute to temperament. For example:

- * Are you a creature of habit or do you like to try new things?
- * Are you outgoing or shy?
- * Does your mood change frequently or are you more even tempered?
- * Do you like to be busy or are you more relaxed?

Then think about how you would describe your child's temperament.

If the Shoe Fits ...

If you and your child have similar temperaments, you may understand where his behavior is "coming from." If you have different temperaments, you may need to try his on for size, or at least keep it in mind, so that you can be aware of how he may be feeling. Listen to him, empathize with him, and be aware of his reactions and feelings.

Either way, working to find a "goodness of fit" between you and your child may help you to:

- * Establish reasonable expectations and discipline.
- * Recognize your child's strengths and help him make the most of them.
- * Anticipate his reactions to situations and prepare and support

him accordingly.

Remember, one size does not fit all when it comes to "goodness of fit." Your parenting style should suit your child's temperament as well as your own. And if you have more than one child, you may need to adjust your style a bit to suit each child. Like extra-wide or narrow feet, your child's temperament can't be changed. However, you can work with it and shape it to help your child learn to love and feel comfortable in his shoes.

I Want More

Information

Learn more about understanding your child's personality at Parents.

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<http://echo.bluehornet.com/ct/2195393:1128854968:m:3:41502625:3172AE45548CC8C819BC9A2F3E2336EA>

New York University's Child Study Center offers information on the match between parenting styles and children's temperaments.

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<http://www.aboutourkids.org/aboutour/articles/parentingstyles.html>

Find more tips about personality and temperament at Family Fun.

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<http://echo.bluehornet.com/ct/2195395:1128854968:m:3:41502625:3172AE45548CC8C819BC9A2F3E2336EA>

The Center for Child Well Being has information on understanding your child's temperament.

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http://www.childwellbeing.org/publish/pf_temper3_understand.asp

Downloadable Tools

Parenting Your Unique Child

>From the University of Wisconsin Extension

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Family Issues Facts: Temperament

>From the University of Maine Cooperative Extension

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Temperament

>From Strategies with Kids, Information for Parents

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Born Learning is a public engagement campaign helping parents, caregivers and communities create early learning opportunities for young children. Designed to support you in your critical role as a child's first teacher, Born Learning educational materials are made available through the efforts of United Way, United Way Success By 6 and Civitas.

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