



Behaviour

nobody's perfect

Understanding Your Child's Temperament

Temperament is the way people learn and respond to their world. Children's temperaments can affect dads and moms in different ways. It is important to understand your child's temperament and find ways to work with it to support your child's healthy development.

There are different kinds of temperaments. Temperament explains why your child's reaction to something is different from another child's reaction. Some children are happy and excited by new things. Some are fearful or anxious in new situations. Some babies are active and never stop wiggling. Some are quiet and hardly cry at all. Some are noisy and cry often.

Your child's temperament has a big effect on their behaviour and is part of what makes your child special. Your child cannot change their temperament. You cannot change it either.

How you respond to your child can make a big difference. If you see your child as special, they will feel good.

Dads and moms have temperaments too. It is helpful to understand your temperament too. Just like children, parents may be quiet, loud, strong, sensitive, thoughtful or action-oriented. Everyone is unique. Your temperament may be very different from your child's and/or their mother's, or it may be just the same. It is important to understand how your temperament fits or does not fit and think of ways to

help each other. As a parent, you need to be open-minded, flexible and responsive to your child's needs.

No matter what your temperaments are, it is important to remember that your child needs a parent who understands them and makes them feel safe, secure, loved and understood.

i Temperament is part of what makes your child special.



For more information about *Nobody's Perfect*, or to download this document, please search "Nobody's Perfect Tipsheets" on Canada.ca.



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Fun & Easy Activities

Make a feelings chart

- One way to help each other understand temperaments is to talk about feelings with your child. Children learn how other people feel by talking about feelings. They learn to understand and respect other people's feelings when their own feelings are respected and understood.
- Draw or print pictures of facial expressions and label them including sad, happy, scared, mad, silly and frustrated. You may want to glue them on to cardboard to make a poster or cut them into small cards.
- When your child is young, you can use the pictures to help your child identify what they are feeling. You can also use the pictures to show your child how you are feeling. Use simple language like "When you helped me sweep—that made me happy."
- You can help your older child to use the pictures to understand how others are feeling in movies or books. Ask questions like "How do you think Spencer felt when he lost his toy?" or "How do you feel when you lose your toys?"



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