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*Listening, learning,
and living together:
it's the science of life.*

Three Basic Types of Temperaments¹

Diana Converse²

We've all heard the line, "My child would never behave like that!" I've usually heard it from people who haven't had children. The way a child acts or reacts may be determined at birth by the child's temperament. The majority of children fit one of three patterns. Forty percent of children are regarded "easy or flexible" while ten percent are considered "strong-willed or high-energy" children. The remaining 15 percent are regarded as "cautious." All other children possess a combination of patterns.

Easy or flexible children are generally calm and happy. Because of their laid-back style, parents need to be sure take the time to talk to their child about their hurts and frustrations, because these children otherwise aren't likely to talk about them.

Strong-willed, high-energy or spirited children are "often fussy, irregular in feeding and sleeping habits, fearful of new people and situations, easily upset by noise and commotion, high strung, and intense in their reactions." Consider soothing activities and use humor to relieve intensity.

"Cautious" children are also called "slow to warm up." They are relatively inactive and fussy and tend to withdraw or to react negatively to new situations. The good news

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is that children's reactions gradually become more positive. It helps to stick to a routine with these children.

Understanding your child's temperament and how to work with it, rather than fight it, will help parents be more effective and help the children better adapt to their surroundings as they mature.

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