

# Quick Tips



## Understanding Temperament in Infant & Toddlers

### Social and Emotional Development

- Children need the ability to experience, manage and express emotions in a healthy way
- Children also need the ability to explore and engage with the environment around them
- The ability to form and sustain positive relationships
- Children are not born with social and emotional skills. They develop over time based on experiences and interactions.

### Exploring Brain Development

- Brain connections are linkages of one nerve cell to other nerve cells so chemicals and messages travel through the brain.
- New brain connections are formed and modified through verbal and physical interactions. The more positive social experiences a baby has in the first three years of life, the more positive connections are made in the brain.
- The brain develops gradually in response to experience and to the environment.

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*Our VISION is for all young children in Georgia to have strong social-emotional foundations for lifelong learning and enhanced academic success that are strengthened through a network of professionals, families, and community members.*

### Key terms in this issue:

**Temperament:** describes the way in which a child approaches and reacts to the world.

**Brain Stem:** controls things like reflexes, breathing, circulation, sleeping, swallowing, and vision

**Cerebral Cortex:** the part of the brain that contains the frontal lobe

**Frontal Lobe:** area of the brain associated with reasoning, planning, problem solving, emotional control and parts of movement and speech.



### CONTACT US

 1-833-354-4357

 [inclusion@decal.ga.gov](mailto:inclusion@decal.ga.gov)

# Zooming in for a closer look...

## Three Primary Temperament Types

- **Easy or Flexible**-Children with this temperament seldom make a fuss. They also want attention from teacher, but may not attempt to get it. They general have positive moods and are highly adaptable.
- **Active or Feisty** -Children with this temperament are often intense in displaying emotions. They need opportunities to make choices. They also require opportunities for active play.
- **Fearful or Slow to Warm**-Children with this temperament may be slow to warm up to new people and new situations. They may need encouragement to approach group play.

## Strategies for Temperament Types

- **Easy or Flexible**- Check in with child often and initiate communication about emotions. Encourage child to seek help when needed. Work with child to communicate feelings and needs to others
- **Active or Feisty**– Be flexible when appropriate. Prepare children for transitions. Create opportunities for active play.
- **Fearful or Slow to Warm**- Provide additional preparation and support for new situations or people. Set up a predictable environment and stick to a clear routine Give children who are cautious ample time to establish new relationships.



## Understanding Temperament

- All children exhibit temperament. Appears to be biologically based and fairly constant over time. Affects a child's reactions to other people and the environment
- While temperament does not clearly define or predict behavior, understanding a child's temperament can help teachers and families better understand how young children react and relate to the world around them



**Georgia Dept  
of Early Care  
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BRIGHT FROM THE START

## Temperament Self-Assessment

Use this brief self-assessment as you create and reflect on your practices related to Temperament

Components	YES	NO	What do I need to make this happen?	Who can support me?
I acknowledge children's temperament traits Ex. "I know you like to watch for a while when we try new things."				
Adapts schedule, behavior and energy level to meet the temperamental characteristics of different children.				
Uses positive or neutral descriptors and avoids negative labels for children's temperament.				
Observes throughout the day and objectively and routinely records the behavior, interactions, and activities.				
Sensitively shares observations regularly with colleagues and child's family to learn if everyone is observing similar things.				
Uses formal and informal assessments to measure child's social-emotional development over time.				