

BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS

Lesson 2: What kind of personality does your child have?



What sort of personality does your child have? Every personality type has both positive and negative aspects. How can you view your child's challenging characteristics as assets instead?

Here are some examples of negative characteristics that also have positive outcomes with the right support from you:

- Stubborn => *Determined, Focused*
- Aggressive => *Energetic, Strong*
- Sensitive => *Caring, Empathic*
- Shy => *Cautious, Thoughtful*
- Clingy => *Loving, Nurturing*

How does your child react when they are upset and what works best for them to calm down:

- Some children will happily stay in the same room as you and accept help to calm down. They need a big hug and are able to let their tears flow freely.
- Some go and play by themselves, welcoming a calm time-out, and are then ready to talk about what happened.
- Others scream and shout when they're upset and may need a few minutes alone in another room to calm down (and allow everyone else to calm down!).

Whichever type of child you have, it's vital to address what happened each time they got upset and make a plan so next time can be different. Show your child you notice who they are by *RESPONDING* to their personality in a positive way using the characteristics above:

- *Stubborn*: show you're *EQUALLY DETERMINED* to stick to the limits you've set. Be *FOCUSED* on the end goal. Let them see they can rely on you to say what you mean.
- *Aggressive*: show you're *STRONG* and have plenty of *ENERGY* to get through this without them hurting you (or themselves).
- *Sensitive*: show extra *EMPATHY* and *CARE* so your child knows you're always here with comfort and understanding.
- *Shy*: help your child *TALK* about what they're *THINKING* and give sensible solutions so they can use some *CAUTION* without avoiding situations entirely.
- *Clingy*: show how much a big hug helps and then *LOVINGLY* guide them to go off and explore independently. *NURTURING* means nourishing with love, reassurance and support to push past boundaries.

Once you feel able to deal with the situation without losing control, connect with your child and ask questions:

- "What are you thinking?"
- "What do you need?"

Note: Some parenting experts don't agree with leaving children alone when they're upset. I agree that children need to feel supported and listened to. However, it's important to take a few minutes to calm yourself down when things are feeling out of control. You'll be no use to your child if you are both shouting.

It doesn't matter if you go into another room or your child does. It's ok if you need to make some space between you, even if it's just being at the opposite end of the same room.

Take deep breaths – use the '3,4,5' technique: count in for 3, hold for 4, out for 5 - and remind yourself that it will be ok. You're in the FIGHT - FLIGHT - FREEZE mind space and it will pass. Then go back to the situation with your brain in gear so you're ready to find a solution.

See more details in 'Complete the Circle' for more details about resolving incidents positively.

Reflections:

- *What kind of personality do you think your child has?*
- *Have you been using these techniques to help them deal with difficult situations or can you see another way to respond from today?*
- *Are you able to sit with your child and help them feel their feelings, then move on or do you need space to calm yourself down first?*
- *How do you feel about needing that space for your own needs?*
- *What's the most useful way to calm yourself down?*

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