

Understanding Your Baby's Temperament



Every baby is unique, and by 4 months old, you'll start seeing more signs of who they are as a person. Temperament plays a role in how they react to new experiences, stimulation, and transitions—and understanding it helps you respond in ways that support their emotional growth.

The Easily Overstimulated Baby

Some babies get overwhelmed when there's too much going on. You might notice your baby:



Looking Away

Turns their head away or rubs their eyes when there is too much stimulation.



Fussy in Crowds

Cries or fusses more in loud, busy places with lots of activity.



Hard to Settle

Struggles to settle down after a busy or stimulating day.

How to Support an Easily Overstimulated Baby



Calm Environment

Keep the environment calm and predictable – dimming the lights before bedtime helps their nervous system wind down.



Gradual Introductions

Limit overstimulation by introducing new people and places gradually and at a comfortable pace.



Give Them a Pause

If your baby starts looking away, give them a pause before continuing interaction so they can reset.

The Super Social Baby

Some babies thrive on interaction and get fussy when they're not engaged. You may notice your baby:



Lights Up

Smiles, coos, and lights up when people talk to them or make eye contact.



Dislikes Being Alone

Fusses or cries when left alone for too long without interaction.



Seeks Connection

Seeks eye contact and loves back-and-forth interactions with caregivers.

How to Support a Super Social Baby

Face-to-Face Time

Offer plenty of face-to-face interaction—talk, sing, and mimic their sounds to keep them engaged.

Use a Carrier

Use a carrier so they feel close to you while you move around the house and go about your day.

Safe Social Opportunities

Provide safe opportunities to interact with new people to build their social confidence over time.

The Big-Reaction Baby

Some babies feel everything intensely – they love hard, cry hard, and need more help regulating emotions. You might notice:



Intense Cries

Cries loudly when hungry or tired – their feelings come through at full volume.



Needs Extra Soothing

Needs extra soothing to calm down and may take longer to regulate after being upset.



Sensitive to Change

Reacts strongly to changes in routine – predictability feels especially important.

How to Support a Big-Reaction Baby

Consistent Comfort

Provide consistent comfort – gentle rocking, swaddling, or a soft shushing sound can help them reset.

Predictable Routine

Stick to a predictable routine to create a sense of security and ease transitions throughout the day.

Validate Their Feelings

Saying "I hear you, I know this is hard" in a calm, reassuring tone helps babies feel understood and safe.

Takeaway: There's No "Right" or "Wrong" Temperament

- ❏ Temperament is not something to "fix" – it's something to understand! Every baby has unique strengths and challenges. By noticing patterns early, you can respond in ways that help your baby feel safe, secure, and connected.

Notice the Patterns

Pay attention to how your baby reacts to new people, places, and stimulation to understand their natural style.

Respond with Warmth

There is no single "right" way to be. Meeting your baby where they are builds trust and emotional security.

Support Their Growth

Understanding temperament early helps you parent with confidence and help your baby thrive in their own way.

References: American Psychological Association (APA), American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Zero to Three, HealthySteps.

American Academy of Pediatrics. (2023). Understanding infant temperament. Retrieved from <https://www.healthychildren.org>

American Psychological Association. (2023). Parenting and emotional regulation in infants. Retrieved from <https://www.apa.org>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023). Social and emotional development at 4 months. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov>

Healthy Steps. (2023). Supporting temperament in infants. Retrieved from <https://www.healthysteps.org>

Zero to Three. (2023). How temperament shapes early experiences. Retrieved from <https://www.zerotothree.org>