



HELPING PARENTS DURING COVID-19

Temperament Styles

How our children react to stress and adversity will vary according to their temperament, background and current circumstances. Within the ATP we recognise and study four main temperament styles in children:

REACTIVITY

Reactivity refers to how strongly children react to events or situations, especially frustration. More reactive kids may be very unsettled and react quickly to discussions, images and news reports. Kids who are less reactive may take many of the changes due to COVID-19 in their stride.

How would you rate your child's reactivity?

Not very reactive 1 2 3 4 5 Highly reactive

SHYNESS

Shyness or sociability refers to how comfortable children are with new people and new situations. Kids who are sociable like being around others and doing group activities with friends. Children who are shy are often good at finding things to do and playing by themselves, and may find it hard coping with changes or transitions.

How would you rate your child's sociability?

Not very shy 1 2 3 4 5 Highly shy

PERSISTENCE

Persistence or self-regulation refers to the extent to which a child can stay on-task and control their attention and emotions, despite distractions and difficulties.

How would you rate your child's persistence?

Not very persistent 1 2 3 4 5 Highly persistent

ACTIVITY

Activity refers to the amount of activity your child shows. Highly active children may find it especially hard to be house-bound while less active children may enjoy extra time doing quiet activities at home.

How would you rate your child's activity?

Not very active 1 2 3 4 5 Highly active

Developed by ATP Generation 3 in collaboration with SEED and the Melbourne Children's Campus



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Helping your child based on their temperament style

Being aware of your child's temperament will help you understand and appreciate their tendencies. This will place you in a better position to help them deal with any stress or problem they may have. Here are a few tips you may like to try:

REACTIVE TEMPERAMENT

Less reactive children may need encouragement to voice their thoughts and feelings and participate in family discussions. If your child is more reactive, they will especially benefit from you tuning into their feelings.

Ask your child how they are feeling. Let them know it is okay to feel upset. Provide facts about what has happened, explain what is going on now and how to reduce their risk of being infected in words that they can understand. Try to keep up with regular routines or help create new ones, as their adaptability is also challenged by school disruptions.

SHY TEMPERAMENT

If your child is quite sociable, more than likely they will cope better with regular contact with family and friends. Schedule a regular catch up with friends or grandparents if you can't see each other in person.

If your child is shy they may find it easier to occupy themselves at home and may prefer one-on-one time with parents or siblings.

PERSISTENT TEMPERAMENT

If your child has a persistent temperament they may cope better with challenging tasks and also setbacks. But they may also be so focused on completing a task or activity they need to be reminded when it is time to stop or have a break or that it's okay to make mistakes.

If your child is less persistent and tends to give up easily, they may need more help to stay focused on an activity, complete more difficult tasks and regulate their emotions if upset.

ACTIVE TEMPERAMENT

If your child is active and is forever jumping and wriggling about, it won't be hard to get them outside for extra time outdoors, even if this is limited to your backyard.

Online exercise programs may be useful if you can't get outside. If your child likes to be indoors, encourage them or do some indoor or outdoor exercise activities.

OTHER LINKS

- The Australian parenting website, Raising Children [talking to children about coronavirus](#)
- Independent Schools Victoria (ISV), The Parents' Website [talking to young people about coronavirus](#)

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