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A Weekly Column from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach

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For Immediate Release

Parenting Easy Children...How hard can it be?

Lori Hayungs, Human Sciences, Family Life

The Science of Parenting blog from Iowa State University (ISU) Extension and Outreach family specialists is dedicated to sharing scientific information with parents.

If you have been following blog, than you know that Lori Hayungs, family life program specialist, has been talking about feisty kids, and slow to warm up kids. To conclude this series on temperament she focuses next on the easy kids.

These are the kids that are usually in good moods and have flexible temperaments. Forty percent of children fall into this category—making easy temperament children the largest of the three temperament groups. They adjust easily to new situations, quickly establish routines, are generally cheerful and easy to calm.

This child has a generally optimistic outlook, can adapt quickly and is usually positive. The easy or flexible child is an easy learner, eats and sleeps regularly (has no trouble sleeping), pleasant and cheerful while maintaining a low-intensity mood. The easy child can be a crybaby and feels deeply in some situations, but they have few significant emotional outbursts.



Hmm...so if these easy babies and children are so easy...how can parenting and raising an easy child be hard?? Parenting children with easy temperaments is usually very easy. It's also very rewarding to parent an easy child. The pitfall of parenting an easy child, is that sometimes they can be so undemanding that the parents think they aren't needed and the child is unconsciously ignored. The babies may receive less stimulation and attention. Parents with easy temperament babies should keep in mind that all babies need lots of parental time and attention, even if they are undemanding,

Let's reinforce the notion that easy or flexible children are generally calm, happy, regular in sleeping and eating habits, adaptable, and not easily upset. Because of their easy style, parents need to set aside special times to talk about the child's frustrations and hurts because he or she won't demand or ask for it. This intentional communication will be necessary to strengthen your relationship and find out what your child is thinking and feeling.

Parenting teaches us as much about ourselves as it does about children. If we're aware of our own feelings and responses, we'll be better parents. The first step can be to understand that your child is an individual, different from either parent, with a different way of seeing the world, and his or her own way of responding to it. Don't worry – most problems with personality sort themselves out given enough time, understanding, and patience. You've got plenty of time to figure this out. So get to know your baby. Let the baby get to know you. And try to enjoy those differences! And if you discover an "easy child" in your home, make sure you are giving them all the attention they desire and need even if they aren't "demanding".

What strategies can a parent use to make sure they are spending enough time with their easy child? Join the blog this month about the temperament and strategies to get to know a child's temperament and your own. Hayungs discusses challenges that parents face parenting siblings of differing temperaments.

As always, Hayungs looks forward to hearing about your experiences around this topic. Share with us how you have learned to understand your child's unique temperament traits. Follow the Science of Parenting blog at <http://blogs.extension.iastate.edu/scienceofparenting>.

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