



# NC SEEDLING



Study to  
Explore  
Early  
Development

North Carolina  
**SEED**

UNC-CH, Department of  
Epidemiology

**Summer 2015**

[www.NCSEED.org](http://www.NCSEED.org)

## NOTES

- SEED has enrolled just over **3000** families
- About **1950** families have finished the study. THANKS for your help!!

## Understanding Temperament

Every child is born with his own individual way of handling the world— a temperament. Generally, the five characteristics that describe an individual's temperament are emotional intensity, activity level, frustration tolerance, reaction to new people, and reaction to change.

Temperament is not something your child chooses, nor is it something that you created. A child's temperament shapes the way he experiences the world. A child who is cautious and needs time to feel comfortable in new situations and a child who jumps right in are likely to have very different experiences going to a classmate's birthday party. A child who

can handle a lot of sensory stimulation will experience a trip to the supermarket differently from a child who has a low threshold for a lot of noise and action.

Understanding your child's temperament helps you be a better parent. Recognizing patterns in your child's behavior that are influenced by temperament can help you anticipate your child's responses to certain situations. If you know that your child has a hard time making transitions, you can guess that pick-up time at child care might be challenging. You could share this observation with your child's teacher and talk about how you can work together to make the end of

the day easier. For example, the teacher can give your child a reminder that it will soon be time to go home. You might also choose to spend a few minutes helping your child finish what she is doing, rather than move her into the car right away.

(From "Zero to Three": <http://www.zerotothree.org/child-development/child-development-behavior/tips-temperament.html>)



## Successful Transitions

Some parenting strategies can help make transitions easier for children who are resistant to change. Parents can:

Offer advance notice when an activity is about to end: "When this book is finished, we're going home."

Use familiar objects to ease anxiety during transitions. A

new doctor will be less scary if your child has her favorite blanket or stuffed animal in hand.

Let your child be part of the transition. Let him put the ball in the stroller bag when it is time to head home from the park or press the button to turn off the TV.

Ease into new activities. Talk about new activities beforehand.

Notice and comment when your child has made a transition: "You got into the car seat so quickly. That's great!"

Give your child a sense of control. For a toddler, you might say, "Would you like to kick the ball one more time before we leave?"

