



Choosing the Right Care Setting for Your Child’s Personality

Your child has a unique personality and style and, although a responsive early care and education provider will be able to adapt her style to meet your child’s needs, you can make choices about the goodness of fit of a childcare setting to make sure your child gets off to a good start.

Adaptability and Tolerance for Change

Most of the time your child is:	Care Setting Factors:
Adaptable, flexible, and highly tolerant: easy going; handles new people and situations, transitions, and change well; copes well with frustrations; patient and persistent.	Center-based large group; perhaps multi-age group; new and challenging activities, experiences; can handle multiple teachers and providers.
Reserved, cautious and easily frustrated: difficulty with changes in routine and transitions, new people, places and experiences; slow-to-warm up; often seems shy; easily overwhelmed; impatient when things don’t work out; gives up if challenged too much.	Family child-care home with few children close in age; familiar activities, toys, materials; responsive caregiver who knows your child’s developmental level and can provide just enough support to encourage learning without frustration.
Lively and spunky: high-spirited with strong feelings and opinions about most things; difficulty waiting for wants and needs to be met; might be impatient; impulsive.	Smaller group with a primary caregiver who can learn to read cues, understand and know how to help regulate your child’s strong feelings.

Activity Level

Most of the time your child is:	Care Setting Factors:
Active: busy, active, on-the-go; in the middle of things; impulsive – acts before thinking; enjoys active play.	Roomy settings with large outdoor play areas and gross motor equipment; a curriculum that emphasizes learning by doing and moving.
Sedentary: prefers quieter activities; chooses the reading corner; can sit and attend for longer periods of time.	Family child-care home with fewer children and a stimulating curriculum; look for lots of sensory exploration opportunities.

Sociability

Most of the time your child is:	Care Setting Factors:
A Social Butterfly: loves meeting and interacting with kids and adults; loves to play with others; prefers company to solitude.	Center-based care might work well with lots of group activities and play.
Shy: prefers to hang back and warm up slowly; happy to play alone or with one or two others.	Family child-care home with fewer children and quiet corners to be alone.

Reactivity

Most of the time your child is:	Care Setting Factors:
Over-reactive and sensitive to many things: dislikes loud noises, bright lights, busy environments, new foods, textures; can seem touchy and fussy; reacts to inputs very intensely and dramatically.	Smaller, quieter care setting like a family child care home with a primary caregiver who will get to know your child; a curriculum that emphasizes social-emotional learning and self regulation.
Under-reactive and under-responsive to most things: can either be self-absorbed and quiet, or a sensation-seeker; may sleep a lot and seem to daydream; or may seek out too much sensation and have a meltdown.	A provider who can read your child's cues, providing more stimulation when needed to get and maintain attention, and less input when child is over-stimulated; strong routines, fewer children, self-choice curriculum.