



Know Your Child

Ray W. Lincoln

How to Observe Your Child and Prepare Yourself for The Child Temperament Key

Here is real help for parenting. Begin by observing your children. Observe what, when, under what conditions, and for what purpose they act the way they do? It's not hard. There are no forms to fill out, and it's fun to discover who your children really are. Your children will love you for it!

To answer the questions in the *Child Temperament Key* and discover how your children have been made on the inside, we will need to examine the four categories of preferences in children (and adults) that can lead us to their temperaments with the greatest accuracy. You will be asked to answer questions about your children in all four

Begin by observing your children.

of these categories when you complete the *Child Temperament Key*.

Once you know your children's temperaments, and understand their temperament, you will have the greatest help in parenting because you will understand how they feel on the inside and why they act the way they do. To obtain a clear understanding of each temperament, refer to my book, ***I'M A KEEPER!*** Your children will know you understand how they feel, and the positive results you experience will surprise you.

You will be asked to answer questions about your children.

To prepare you for filling out the *Child Temperament Key*, observe the following factors in their behavior. Have fun, and share with each other what you are observing. Make your observations in all the following four categories because the *Child Temperament Key* will require you to do this.

Have fun, and share with each other what you are observing.

Observe the following for your child's "energy and social" preferences

Watch them when their energy levels are low

What do your children do when they appear to be low on energy (when they appear drained)? Do they seek the company of others, or contentedly seek solitude? Also, notice: Do they play happily on their own for periods, or do they do so for brief periods and then invade the space of others? Do they appear to have a real, expressed need to be with others? Or do they seem to like being on their own?

Watch them when they meet strangers

When approached by strangers, do they hold their head erect and approach the stranger as though they have no fear? Or do they drop their head and seek the protection of a parent?

If they are older, do they ignore the presence of strangers and appear inconsiderate? In reality, there may be something else going on inside of them?

Do they persistently seek and find the company of others (especially if they are teens) and strongly resist being torn away from their friends (which are many)? Are their fingers and ears glued to their cell phones? Or do they have noticeably fewer friends (perhaps only two or three) and move in smaller circles? For all ages, watch how many friends they develop.

Fights and struggles frequently occur, and are mishandled, due to lack of understanding of this aspect of temperament alone.

Observe shyness and understand its source

Observe their shyness carefully. Are they shy because they have been frightened? If not frightened by the sudden invasion of a stranger, ask yourself: Are they seldom disturbed by strangers, or do they continue to show some awkwardness?

Are they shy only toward strangers, but not necessarily toward those they are comfortable with and have come to accept for whatever reason?

Reasons for observing this category:

An understanding of this aspect of temperaments in your family will give you a clue to handling many disputes and disciplinary issues. Fights and struggles frequently occur, and are mishandled, due to lack of understanding of this aspect of temperament alone. We can help you identify and solve these eruptions, as well as many other problems that occur with opposite temperaments. You will learn how to help them develop in social circles and relate well to others after you have taken the Child Temperament Key and learned about their temperaments.

Observe the following for “information gathering” preferences

This may be the most difficult of the four categories to decipher. However, it is the most important in understanding your children and in determining their temperaments. So, work at this one!

Observe two different worlds

Does your child prefer the real world outside of himself (or herself) or the world inside of his mind? To discover this we observe:

- How they respond to fanciful stories that are full of imaginary characters. Do they seem enthralled with them, or bored and wanting to get back to playing with their toys?
- Do they daydream a lot and seem to happily live inside their minds?
- As they play with their toys, do they weave imaginary characters and stories around them? Is their toy an imaginary character (some character created in their imagination – unrealistic and, perhaps, otherworldly) rather than what it might represent in daily life: a truck or a doll?
- Are they more about their imagination, the possibilities, and ideas that the future holds; or more about the real world of play, people, and things?
- Is their speech more about the real world of things and people; or more about ideas, concepts, and imaginary possibilities? As they get older, this will become more apparent.
- Is their speech more about the real world of things, places, events and people; or more about ideas, concepts and imaginary possibilities?

It makes all the difference to your parenting to know whether your child lives in your world or a different world from you.

If you can't figure this one out, concentrate on the other questions.

Observe what happens when expectations are dashed

If your child expected something to happen and it doesn't, do he (or she) get really upset and stay upset for a long time? Or does he get over the disappointment quickly and find something else to interest him?

Does it seem to you that dashed expectations somehow deeply disappoint your child's hopes, and your child finds it hard to adjust to disappointments?

Is your child easy to handle or hard to handle?

I know that this is relative; but try to evaluate it.

Emotions are feelings that surge inside of us and can either find expression outwardly, or be buried inside and hidden from view. Emotions can be deeply personal and the most difficult thing to handle in parenting (both for the child and the parent). Do you find

it hard to manage your child? Or do you feel you are blessed with an “ordinary” child: one who is like most other children?

Observe your reactions to your child

Does your child puzzle you and make you wonder where he/she came from?

Do you feel that your child is not at all like you? Are the reasons for your child’s actions a mystery?

Reasons for observing this category:

We live dominantly in one of two worlds: the real world, or in the virtual world of the mind. It makes all the difference to your parenting to know whether your child lives in your world or a different world from you — a world that will confuse you. You must understand your child’s world. Your child will know whether you understand her (or him); and if the child feels you don’t, you will lose her. If you observe these things carefully, the questions in the *Child Temperament Key* will be much easier to answer.

Knowing which worlds your children live in, and what that implies to your relationship with them, will help you develop a close bond and keep you in their circle of “people I need.”

Observe the following for their “decision-making” preferences

Observe what part emotion plays in their lives

Decision-making in the home will not be a battle any longer since you will know why they act the way they do.

- Are they more firm with people, or more gentle and considerate?
- Do you have a cool, calm child; or a warm, emotionally volatile child?
- Does your child find it hard to make decisions because he (or she) can’t easily settle his emotional desires?
- Do they upset easily and often, or less than you would expect?

Observe their need of closeness

- Do they sit close to you, wanting to touch you (unless they are angry with you)?
- Do they like to be touched?
- Are they distant, remote, and self reliant?

Head or heart

- Are they all about reason, logic, and what makes sense; or more about harmony, love and tender consideration of others?
- Does your child get easily hurt?
- Do they want to know how things work, and constantly ask “Why?” to the point it frustrates you to come up with answers all the time?

Reasons for observing this category:

If you know the answers to these questions, you will be on your way to understand how and why they make decisions the way they do. Decision-making in the home will not be a battle any longer since you will know why they act the way they do, and you will learn how to handle the clashes or problems. You will be able to teach them better decision-making skills.

Observe the following for “lifestyle” preferences

Children quickly develop distinct lifestyles. These questions will ask you to observe their lifestyle.

Knowing your children’s lifestyles, particularly if different from yours, helps you apply workable solutions and create much more peace for all concerned.

- Do they like to get things done and like to get decisions made? Or do decisions unnerve them?
- Do they like to know what they will be doing tomorrow? Or do they show no interest in knowing what is planned?
- When they are late, are they upset? Or do they not seem to care whether they are on time?
- Do they live life with a sense of urgency? Or are they really laid back?

Reasons for observing this category:

Different lifestyles in a family will cause tensions and struggles. Knowing your children’s lifestyles, particularly if different from yours, helps you apply workable solutions and create much more peace for all concerned.

These observations will help you answer the questions in the *Child Temperament Key* and prepare you to understand how your children have been made on the inside.

Invest in your parenting, and in your child!

You have chosen to take the best of journeys with a goal to parent your children with understanding and skill. You will be paid back: first, with less undesirable behavior; but also with your own confidence, and much more satisfaction. You will be excited that you know your children and can satisfy them with a “chocolate coated” love: “chocolate coated” with understanding that bonds you to them and prepares the way for the roller coaster of teenage!

*...a “chocolate coated” love:
“chocolate coated” with
understanding.*

Popular parenting methods don't fit all children or all issues that arise in parenting. Understanding your children and how they are made is the real key to parenting success. Invest in your parenting and in your children's future. It's more important to invest in understanding than to buy them another toy. It is your love and understanding that will feed their spirits and mold your relationship with them.

Now, enjoy observing your children with purpose!

*Understanding your children and how they are made is the real key to
parenting success.*

After you have observed your child for a week or two, complete the Child Temperament Key and the Adult Temperament Key.

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