

Overview of Childhood Characteristics

Three Physical Types
Four Temperaments
Six Constitutional Types
Seven Soul Types

by

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Three Physical Types:

Endomorph: Soft and spherical
Large stomach and liver—large digestive viscera
Loves food, and is glutton for affection
Sociable, loves people
Floats easily in water—excess fat
Behavior—exhibits extreme love of relaxation and
comfort

Mesomorph: Upright
Firm skin
Big bones—well developed heart and circulatory
system
Relatively strong
Loves exercise, activity
Tries to dominate

Ectomorph: Flat chest, pipe-stem arms and legs
Thin, fragile
Linear
Restrained
Can be over-sensitive
Desires concealment
Withdraws from ordinary social occasions

Temperaments:

Sanguine:

Build: slender, elegant, well-balanced
Walk: on toes (dances like a butterfly)
Eyes: lively, dancing
Relationships: fickle
Food: nibbles
Memory: like a sieve
Interest: the present, here and now
Clothing: new and colorful

To stimulate: ask a personal favor
Parent and teacher attitude: show friendly interest, but be
firm

Phlegmatic:

Build: big, fleshy, rotund
Walk: plodding, ambling (has a steamroller-like quality)
Eyes: sleepy, often half-closed
Relationships: friendly, impassive, reserved
Food: eats most everything and is always interested in food

Memory: good concerning the world

Interest: the present, without getting involved

Clothing: conservative

To stimulate: speak directly to the point, use shock tactics

Parent and teacher attitude: show calm strength

Melancholic:

Build: tall, bowed-head, bony

Walk: slow with a drooping, sliding gait

Eyes: tragic, mournful

Relationships: poor, has sympathy only with fellow
melancholics

Food: finicky, especially likes sweets

Memory: good concerning self

Interest: self and the past

Clothing: dark, drab, solid colors—is difficult to please

To stimulate: explain how others will suffer if he/she is not
compliant

Parent and teacher attitude: show sympathy and
empathize with suffering

Choleric:

Build: bullnecked, upright, short legs, husky

Walk: firm, heels dig into the ground with each step

Eyes: energetic, active

Relationships: friendly as long as he/she is in command

Food: spicy

Memory: poor

Interest: the world, self, and future

Clothing: individual and outstanding

To stimulate: issue a challenge

Parent and teacher attitude: recall events and deeds (the next day), be firm, strong, and to the point

Six Constitutional Types of Children

Large-headed child:

Large head in relation to body

Large forehead, big occiput

Rosy cheeks

Introverted

Good concentration

Dreamy and imaginative

Artistic

To moderate: Rudolf Steiner indicates washing the head and neck with cold water in the morning, and a diet rich in root vegetables since these have a high content of salty substances. However, great care must be taken in the use of salt.

Small-headed child:

Small cranium (often flat)

Thin and pale

Face is defined

Poor concentration, easily distracted

Analytical

Can be physically agile

To moderate: warm towels on abdomen in the evening; a diet rich in leafy vegetables, teas, with lots of sweet nutrients such as figs, honey, dates, and so forth.

Cosmic child:

Full, round head that is well-formed physically and functionally

“All that is soul and spirit leaves its mark on our head.” —Steiner

The rest of the body appears to lack full penetration of the formative forces

Dreamy

Not well-coordinated physically

Does not like physical activities

Good perception

Poor in executing and/or concluding a thought process

To moderate: needs to feel the form in geometry rather than the beauty; practice walking on balancing beams; need to awaken compassion for others.

Earthly child:

Forces of heredity work strongly
Loves the earth and usually has dirty hands
Loves material things like cars, trucks, electronics, and so forth.
Loves motion
Quite practical but lacks fine motor skills

To moderate: needs special, individual attention; must be compelled to draw beautiful and accurate geometric forms; should be encouraged to play rhythm instruments.

Fantasy-rich child:

Good memory, in fact, too good; cannot forget
Pictures come up involuntarily
Ego cannot bring thoughts under control
Fantastic imaging and picture-building capacities
Powerful imaginations

To moderate: can become a prisoner of his/her own ideas and methods—keep him/her fluid; attention on handwriting and painting or any activity that brings him/her into movement.

Fantasy-poor child:

Weak imaginative forces
Dry
Easily forgets

To moderate: must be encouraged to be more observant; consonants must be stressed in speech exercises; the “I” needs to be activated; in eurythmy, lots of movements with the arms while standing still.

The Seven Soul Types

The classification of children by temperaments works well up to puberty. It can be dangerous, after this point, to try to categorize the students too rigidly, as most people at this age are a mixture of three or four, with one or two being more dominant. As adulthood dawns, the effect of the ego becomes more apparent and things become more complicated. In fact, instead of pure temperament (which does not exist anyway), we have a much more complex entity. Max Stibbe, in *The Seven Soul Types*, describes seven predominant dispositions that come forward. Below is a summary.

Saturn:

- Active introvert
- Ego conscious; serious relationship to life
- Needs time to work things through
- Makes a silent impression
- Memory and conscience of a group
- Guardian of original resolutions
- Keeps view of original aims
- Can miss the moment

Jupiter:

- Active balanced
- Can see solutions to arguments
- Decisive
- Can be seen as emotionally cool
- Jovial at times

Mars:

- Active extrovert
- Aggressive, dynamic, wants to tackle everything

Brings life and movement
Takes initiative
Can work through the spoken word
Does not always respect the freedom of others
Unsettled by Jupiter
Put in place by Venus

Sun:

Very rare
Can be successful
Accompanied by luck
Needs artistic education or withers
Can deal with other people; charming, naive, spontaneous,
balanced
Little personal ambition, hence overestimated
Takes a central position without ruling

Venus:

Passive
Balanced but more extrovert than introvert
Aesthetic type
Strong in sympathy and antipathy
Can be outspoken, judgmental
Can also judge moral beauty, ugliness
Can act as group conscience
More princess than queen
Strong sense of inner hygiene

Mercury:

Passive extrovert

Mobile, agile

Can effectively combine ideas, people, facts-in-chaos

Good relationship with Jupiter

Diplomatic, mediator

Economical with the truth

Moon:

Passive introvert

Dreamy; agreeably social; good unoriginal taste

Wide interests; nearly photographic memory, but not an
exact memory

Can be superficial

Reflects current trends