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Temperament Case Study for Use in Training

Use this case study in trainings with mental health consultants, education supervisors, and other early childhood staff. Learn to observe and recognize children's temperance temperament traits and determine if the child-caregiver relationship is a good fit. Use the strategies in the [IT³ \(Infant Toddler Temperament Tool\)](#) to explore ways to match caregiving styles to best fit the child's temperament.

Child: Micah, 22 months old

Adult: Ms. Mitchell, Micah's child care provider for the last six months

Child's likes and dislikes collected through observation and interview:

- Loves vehicles
- Likes to use his bear as a comfort item
- Likes to stay close by to caregiver
- Has a good focus for hands on activities like puzzles
- Affectionate toward peers and familiar adults
- Does not respond well to touching sticky or unfamiliar substances like clay, needs time to observe first
- Gets up and really moves to music
- Is a light sleeper
- Is a great eater, likes to try many new things

Sample Observation

Caregiver: Ms. Mitchell

Child: Micah

Person Observing: Consultant

It is 2:50 p.m. and Micah is sitting on Ms. Mitchell's lap in the comfy corner watching another caregiver say hello to a little girl and goodbye to her parent. Micah has his hand resting on Ms. Mitchell's leg. Ms. Mitchell is singing a hello song to each child as they arrive and is bouncing her legs to the beat. Micah sees the parent give the child a teddy bear and a hug. Micah gets up from Ms. Mitchell's lap and moves towards his cubby. He finds and reaches inside his diaper bag and pulls out his own teddy bear from home.

Micah walks over to Ms. Mitchell and sits down on the floor next to her with his bear. He holds the bear up and smiles at Ms. Mitchell and says, "Bear." Ms. Mitchell smiles back and says, "Yes, Micah, that is your bear." Ms. Mitchell gets up and walks quickly over to the snack area and says, "I will be right back and she resumes her singing." Micah looks up at her and smiles. He puts the bear down and begins to play with some blocks that another caregiver puts down in front of him. Another child sits

down next to Micah and starts to place one block on top of another. Micah looks over and smiles. He says, "Block." Micah scoots closer to his peer and puts his hand on her arm and says, "Sara." Sara scoots away and says, "Mine." Micah leans over and hugs Sara. Sara says, "No, hug." Micah frowns and looks up toward Ms. Mitchell.

Information from IT³ (Infant Toddler Temperament Tool)

Ms. Mitchell's Temperament Traits:

1. High activity
2. High distractibility
3. High intensity
4. High regularity
5. Low sensitivity
6. High approachability
7. Low adaptability
8. High persistence
9. Positive mood

Micah's Temperament Traits:

1. Low activity*
2. Low distractibility*
3. Low intensity*
4. High regularity
5. High sensitivity*
6. High approachability
7. High adaptability*
8. High persistence
9. Positive mood

**Indicate traits that Ms. Mitchell and Micah differ on.*

Sample Suggestions for a Goodness of Fit When the Temperament Traits of a Caregiver or Parent Differ from a Child's

For the Child that Has Low Distractibility ▼

For the Child with a High Sensitivity ▼

Tips for High Persistence ▼

Tips for High Approachability ▼

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Child care providers, Mental Health

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IT3 Infant Interactive Tool

The Infant Toddler Temperament Tool (IT³) was developed for the Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, an Innovation and Support Project funded by the Office of Head Start.

Directions for completing the IT³ (Infant Toddler Temperament Tool) for you and your infant:

Please rate yourself and your infant on the following nine traits. Check the box for each trait that comes closest to describing each of your regular behaviors. Remember, you can use the chart of Temperament Traits </mental-health/article/temperament-traits-chart> for definitions of each trait.

While individuals' temperaments fall along a continuum, choose the typical behavior that describes how you and your infant regularly behave.

There are no "good" or "bad" temperamental traits. Every infant is born with unique personalities that make them special.

The IT³ (Infant Toddler Temperament Tool) takes approximately five to 10 minutes to complete.

Read the following statement as you rate each trait for you and your infant. More often than not, you and your infant behave in a way that can be described as:

Dimensions (hover over terms below for a definition)	Typical Behavior Indicator	I am ...	Your infant is ...
1. Activity Level	Highly Active	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Less Active	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Distractibility	Easily Distracted	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Less Distracted (More Focused)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Intensity	Intense Personality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Relaxed Personality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Regularity	Highly Regular	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	More Spontaneous (Irregular)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Sensitivity	Highly Sensitive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Less Sensitive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Approachability	Highly Approachable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Less Approachable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Adaptability	Highly Adaptable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Less Adaptable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Persistence	Highly Persistent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Less Persistent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Mood	Positive Mood	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Serious Mood	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Get Your Results

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