

Temperament

Psychology

Early-appearing individual differences, and how they relate to later personality.

Biologically based individual differences in reactivity and self-regulation, observable from early infancy and forming the foundation on which personality develops.

VISIBLE FROM
infancy

STABILITY
moderate

- Thomas and Chess: easy, difficult and slow-to-warm-up types.
- Kagan: behavioural inhibition is stable and predicts later anxiety.
- Rothbart: surgency, negative affectivity, effortful control.
- Goodness of fit between temperament and environment matters more than temperament alone.
- Moderately heritable.
- Maps loosely onto adult Big Five dimensions.

LOOK FOR IT

A highly reactive infant is more likely to become a shy child, but far from certainly.

Goodness of fit is the key clinical idea: outcomes depend on the match between the child and the environment, not the child alone.