

No Two Kids Are Alike— Teaching to Your Child's Personality

By Karen Whiting

IT MIGHT SEEM LIKE your child belongs in the Hundred Acre Woods because your child is a bouncing Tigger, a productive Rabbit, a gloomy Eeyore, or a relaxed Pooh. That's their personality shining through.

Understand a child's bent and it will be easier to teach him or her. There are four core personality types that go back to Greek philosophy.

- Popular **Sanguine**, like Tigger, is noisy, social, loud, and bouncy.
- Powerful **choleric**, like Rabbit, sets goals, leads naturally, and is driven.
- Perfect **melancholy**, like Eeyore, is sensitive, perfectionist, wants structure, analyzes things, is introverted, and whines when upset.
- **Phlegmatic**, like Pooh, is a peacemaker, naturally humorous, relaxed, and procrastinates.

Those are basic descriptions. You may instantly recognize what category your child is in, or you may want to do an online test to identify your child's dominant and secondary personalities.

Motivation Factors

Consider what motivates your child's personality type.

Interacting with people, fun activities, and stories of people motivates the sanguine person. She wants to work with someone or be surrounded by people. Set up her workspace in the family room or center of the

classroom. Let her have a study buddy, read online to a family member, and enroll her in some group activities. Let her workspace be bright and include a bulletin board where she can pin photos.

A powerful choleric child is motivated by charts, rewards, and goals, and likes control. She wants a calendar, reward chart, and space she can control and set up. She would prefer to pick her spot for her desk and help set the goals and choose the books to use for each subject.

A perfect melancholy likes privacy and space and is motivated by order and encouragement. He might want a curtained or screened-off area or spot in his bedroom for studying. He might like to write in a logbook or journal to record progress, but wants it to remain private. He might take a long time on assignments because of the desire to be perfect. Encourage this child to relax and accept less than perfect. Allow extra time for studying. He won't want to join groups until he observes them for a while and knows the schedule because he wants to be prepared. This child is analytical so choose books with maps, charts, and hands-on experiments for investigating.

The relaxed phlegmatic child is motivated by the promise of peace, time to relax, and food. Avoid letting this child work in bed or on a couch, as she will tend to fall asleep. She will want a comfortable chair and easy access to supplies, books, and tools. A chair with wheels makes it easy to glide over to where items are stored.



What Roadblocks Stop Your Child?

Each personality has triggers that can cause a shutdown or stop progress. These are:

- **Lack of fun** for the sanguine, so end the day with a shared snack time or play date and end the week with an outing. Choose books that include stories. Include show-and-tell time for child to share what he learned or act out a history or language art lesson.
- **Loss of control** for choleric crushes her and she'll start to argue more. Let her set a schedule and help plan the work. Give her stickers to put on a chart as she meets goals. Talk about what works and what is not working and switch books or programs if needed. Retest avoided subjects to be sure the child is on the right level since she learns fast. Let this child tutor a younger child in a favorite subject as responsibility and leading someone is a great motivator.
- **Disorder and chaos** make life difficult for the perfect melancholy, so schedule time to clean out his or her desk or work area at the end of the school day and end of the week. Provide organization and a schedule for the days. If the child whines, stop and listen to her needs. Give more encouragement.
- **Disruption and lack of peace** makes the phlegmatic despair. Talk softer, use humor, and schedule short breaks between subjects. Keep supplies in reach so the child will not stop because he doesn't want to go get something. Use jokes and take time to laugh. Be firm about completing assignments before snacks or playtime.

Purchase the Right Books and Supplies

Your child's personality is key to what tools and books might work best.

- **Sanguines** like books with stories that focus on people and include games and social interaction as part of learning. Look for history books that focus on the people and their stories. Consider having costumes to dress up for different eras. In science, include books that share stories or those who made discoveries or invented something.
- **Cholerics** like facts and the basic information. They tend to learn quickly and don't want books with lots of repetition. They want to reach the goal of completing a book, so divide the book into the number of weeks you will work on it and stay on schedule.
- **Melancholy** students work slow and steady but remember what they have learned. They like books with charts, experiments, facts, and information they can analyze. This child is often artistic and may like lots of art supplies to make each subject more colorful.
- **Phlegmatics** like humor, so a book with funny facts included can grab their interest. They will work better with a reward system. This child naturally likes to sit and read and

play board games, so provide those to go with subjects. Start the day with a few jokes so they will be in a good humor. He wants comfort and takes longer to transition to the next subject, so larger blocks of time on one subject is better. That may mean one subject or two per day rather than all of them each day. They like a routine and will adapt when they know what you expect. He or she needs timed warnings before transitions.

Continue observing your child's bent and note what works best. They are not cookie cutter kids and the homeschool atmosphere allows you to teach to each one's temperament. 🧠

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Karen Whiting (www.karenwhiting.com) is the author of eighteen books, including inspirational craft books like God's Girls #1 and #2, and The One Year Devotions for Active Boys. Check out her latest book, *Raising a Young, Modern-Day Princess: Growing the Fruit of the Spirit in Your Little Girl*.

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