

Determining Your Child's Personality Type

Though many books on personality typing are available today, Hippocrates laid the foundation for subsequent discussions of personality when he identified the personality types nearly twenty-five hundred years ago. The four types and some of their commonly recognized characteristics are:

- Choleric: adventurous, determined, outspoken, competitive, strong-willed
- Sanguine: playful, sociable, talkative, lively, imaginative
- Melancholy: detailed, orderly, persistent, respectful, deep
- Phlegmatic: thoughtful, controlled, adaptable, attentive, diplomatic

Whether or not these terms are familiar to you, you've probably intuited a lot about your child's personality type just by noticing his everyday reactions and motivations. The following quiz will help you recognize what you already know about your child — and better understand why he behaves the way he does.

1. You can truthfully say, "I'd be a millionaire if only I could bottle and sell my child's ..."

- a) optimism.
- b) persistence.
- c) kindness.
- d) confidence.

2. Your son keeps you up until 2 a.m. the night before his school's science fair because

- a) Though he's been talking for days about his great plans, he casually mentions over dinner that he hasn't actually started his project yet.
- b) He refuses to go to bed until you help him make sure that each planet in his model of the solar system is exact to scale.

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- c) He spent so much time helping his best friend finish his project that he's starting his own late.
- d) He's willing to sacrifice sleep in order to be sure his complicated and innovative project is better than anyone else's – and will win the blue ribbon.

3. When you take your daughter to her first overnight camp, you are impressed because your child

- a) Charms her counselor and makes five new friends before she's unpacked her bags.
- b) Completes all five levels of the Red Cross swimming safety course in just one week.
- c) Is able to restore peace to her cabin after one camper unfairly accuses another of swiping a CD.
- d) Organizes and emcees the final night's camper talent show.

4. Your daughter comes home from school crying because

- a) A boy laughed after school by mimicking her enthusiastic cheering during the previous day's football game.
- b) Despite carefully following all her teacher's detailed directions, she received a C on her art project.
- c) She watched another child being mercilessly teased on the bus ride home and was unable to stop the bullies from picking on that classmate.
- d) She lost her class's election for a seat on the student council.

5. When your child's teacher tells you how much she enjoys having your son in class, it is most likely because

- a) He's creative, cheerful, and comes up with great new ideas.
- b) He doesn't quit but keeps working on a project until it's done right.
- c) He listens calmly and intently in class and does everything he can to please his teachers.

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- d) He catches on to material quickly and enjoys teaching other kids what he knows.
6. At age four, your child likes playing in the big sandbox at the park because
- a) It is the best place to find a new friend to play with or someone else to talk to.
 - b) He loves to use his 48-piece sand-castle kit to build intricate buildings.
 - c) He can see you sitting on the nearby bench at all times and knows you'll step in to help if an older child tries to steal his toys.
 - d) He has a captive audience and can tell everyone else what to build.
7. Your child's excuse for not cleaning her room on Saturday morning is that
- a) She wants to tell you all about your neighbor's new puppy first.
 - b) There's nothing to clean. You walk in her room and find out she's right: Everything is already clean and neatly organized.
 - c) She's unsure where to start.
 - d) She shouldn't have to clean her room until you start cleaning the rest of the house.
8. When you ask your child whether he'd like to return to your family's favorite vacation spot or take a sightseeing tour to New York City this summer, he says
- a) New York City! Maybe he'll actually run into celebrities when your family walks down Broadway. In fact, maybe one of them will even invite him to a casting call!
 - b) He'd prefer returning to the same resort, where he knows the schedule and what to expect each day of the week.
 - c) Your family's traditional spot; it holds warm memories for him.
 - d) New York City. It will be a new adventure, and he can already tell you the four sites your family must not miss.
9. Other people are always remarking on your child's

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- a) energy and enthusiasm.
- b) attention to detail.
- c) thoughtfulness.
- d) leadership ability.

If you circled mostly 1's, your child is likely a sanguine and primarily interested in being with other people and having fun.

If you circled mostly 2's, your child is probably a melancholy who wants to get things just right.

If you circled mostly 3's, your child is most likely a phlegmatic who cares deeply about others' feelings.

If you circled mostly 4's, your child is probably a choleric who values adventure and being the leader.

Note: Many children have several characteristics from two of these types.

James Dobson