

Twelfth Family Research Network (FRN) Forum

“Understanding the Early Years in Childhood – A Singapore Perspective”

Tuesday, 15 July 2014
Mochtar Riady Auditorium, Level 5
SMU Administration Building

PRESENTATION I

Pre-school Teachers' and Parents' Beliefs and Knowledge with regards to Early Childhood Temperament

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Pre school teachers' and parents' beliefs and knowledge with regards to early childhood temperament

Sponsored by the Early Childhood Development Agency
NUHS Ethics board approval

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Constitutionally based individual differences in emotional and attentional reactivity and self regulation, influence over time by heredity and experience.

DEFINITION OF TEMPERAMENT

THE NATURE OF TEMPERAMENT

Historical Background

- Thomas and Chess and their colleagues – New York Longitudinal Study¹
- Bell's (1968, 1974) : Child's role in early parent child interaction²
- Socialization was no longer seen as a unilateral process³
- Children differ in certain qualities i.e. unique

¹NYLS, Thomas, Chess, Birch, Hertzig, & Korn, 1963

²Bell 1968; Lewis and Rosenblum, 1974

³Theoretical Issues in Temperament. Mary Klevjord Rothbart, Douglas Derryberry

NYLS 9 Temperament Traits

Activity Level

Rhythmicity

Approach vs
withdrawal

Adaptability

Intensity

Threshold

Mood

Distractibility

Persistence

Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child's idle speed or how active the child generally is
Distractibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree of concentration and paying attention displayed when a child is not particularly interested in an activity • Ease with which external stimuli interfere with ongoing behavior
Intensity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy level of a response whether positive or negative
Regularity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predictability of biological functions like appetite and sleep
Sensory threshold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How sensitive this child is to physical stimuli • Amount of stimulation (sounds, tastes, touch, temperature changes) needed to produce a response in the child
Approach / Withdrawal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child's characteristic response to a new situation or strangers
Adaptability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How easily the child adapts to transitions and changes, like switching to a new activity
Persistence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length of time a child continues in activities in the face of obstacles
Mood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tendency to react to the world primarily in a positive or negative way

1. Temperament and parenting
2. Temperament and the classroom
3. Temperament and the child's outcome

SPREAD OF TEMPERAMENT RESEARCH

Temperament & Parenting

- Cumulative risk factor for behavioural outcome^{1,2,3,4}
- Resilience factor in psychosocial stress, poor parenting and divorce^{5,6}
- How parent behaviors may act as risk or protective factors in child development⁷

¹Bates and Bayles (1988)

²Cameron 1978

³Fisher and Fagot 1992

⁴Sanson, Smart, Prior, & Oberklaid, 1993

⁵Werner & Smith 1982

⁶Lengua, Wolchik, Sandler and West (2000)

⁷Journal of Clinical Child Psychology 1982, Vol 11, No 2, 123-129

Temperament & Classroom

- General intelligence: ability to understand complex ideas, to adapt effectively to the environment, to learn from experience, to engage in various forms of reasoning, to overcome obstacles by taking thought^{1,2}
- Effortful control : ability to control attention, inhibit impulses, and initiate subdominant actions in flexible and adaptive ways³

¹Neisser et al., 1996, p. 77

²Gottfredson, 2004; Lubinski, 2009

³Rothbart, Sheese, & Posner, 2007

Temperament & Classroom

- Teacher's perception: 'teachability' of the child
- Classroom adjustment / behavior
- Classroom experience
- Actual educational achievement

Temperament & Child's outcomes

- Place some children at risk for reactive forms of aggressive behavior¹
- Relate to later social shyness or anxiety disorders or both²
- Effects of temperament-related emotional dysregulation on skills such as social information processing and interactional choices¹
- Affect developing emotional–cognitive competencies³
- Links between temperament and coping with stress⁴

¹Frick & Morris 2004

²Turner, Beidel, & Wolff, 1996

³2002 Lemelin, Tarabulsy, and Provost

⁴Compas, Connor-Smith, and Jaser 2004

Goodness of fit

- Lack of fit between the child's temperament and the caretaker's responses¹
- Cause of stress
- Over-assignment of problems within the child's presented behaviours
- Can result in positive or negative outcomes²
- Contributes to learning and achievement

¹Child Temperament: An integrative review of concepts, research Programs, and measures European Journal of developmental science 2008, Vol 2, No1/2, 7-37

²Keogh BK. Temperament in the classroom: understanding individual differences. 1st ed. Baltimore: Brookes Publishing, 2002

Cultural / Population Differences

- Genetic differences¹
- Values and methods of child rearing²
- Socialization methods and language³
- Childhood temperament is under studied in our local population

¹Bates, 1989; Zawadzki, Strelau, Oniszczenko, Roemann, & Angleitner, 2001

²Kohnstamm 1989

³European Journal of Personality, Vol 7, 359-377, 1993

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THANK YOU.