

The Effects of Birth Order

If you are the First Born, you may have the following traits:

- * A perfectionist
- * Too involved with too many activities
- * People-pleasers; you don't know how to say "NO".
- * Conscientious
- * Need structured "to do" lists
- * Strong powers of concentration
- * Hard driving personalities
- * Caregivers / servants vs. assertive/strongwilled
- * Cautious/careful
- * Patience
- * Hard-driving personalities
- * High expectations for self and others

NOTE: A firstborn can be the first child in the family; the first gender born in the family (ie., the first daughter after two sons or vice versa.); or the first child born after a five-year interval.

TIPS FOR PARENTING THE FIRSTBORN:

1. Don't reinforce the firstborn's perfectionistic tendencies.
2. Firstborns need to know exactly what the rules are; Be patient. Let them know what the day's activities are and what to expect in situations.
3. Recognize their place in the family with special privileges.
4. Take two on one time with the oldest.
5. Stay away from making them an "instant babysitter". Ask before you assume.
6. As they get older, don't pile on added responsibilities.
7. Give help only when asked. Firstborns are very sensitive to criticism.

If you are the Middle Child, you may have the following traits:

- * Mediator
- * Many friends
- * A maverick
- * Extreme loyalty to the peer group (running with the pack)
- * Avoids conflicts
- * More friends outside the family, the "outsider"
- * Secretive
- * Most monogamous
- * Prone to embarrassment
- * Contradictions in descriptions of typical middle child: sociable, loner vs. sociable, rebel vs. mediator, impatient vs. laid back, competitive vs. not competitive, aggressive vs. avoiding conflict.

PARENTING THE MIDDLE CHILD

1. Recognize many middle children avoid sharing how they really feel -- set extra times for sharing.
2. Take extra time to make your middle child feel special.
3. Set up regular privileges they can count on every day/week.
4. Give them a new item of clothing once in awhile... not only hand-me-downs.
5. Listen carefully: their desire to avoid conflict may get in the way of the real story.
6. Be sure the family album has its share of pictures of your middle child.

If you are the Last Born, a.k.a., the "Baby", you may have the following traits:

- * Charming
- * "The clown"
- * Manipulative
- * Blames others
- * Shows off/Center of Attention
- * Self Centered
- * People Person
- * Precocious
- * Engaging
- * Good Salesperson
- * "Space Cadet"
- * Ambivalent

**Note: The "baby" may be the last born child in a family, or the child whose younger sibling is five or more years younger.

PARENTING THE "BABY"

1. Be sure they have their fair share of responsibilities around the house.
2. Be sure they do not get away with murder in regards to family rules.
3. While not "coddling" don't let them get clobbered or lost in the shuffle.
4. Introduce them to reading early--when they start, don't do work for them (the youngest are often the poorest readers in the family.)
5. Call the baby's bluff and put the pressure on the child to live up to his/her responsibilities.
6. Get the child's baby book completed before they are 21. Take time with them!
7. Try to pick out a nice first born for them as marriage partners.