

PARENTING MATTERS

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Newsletter

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This has been a month of heightened family time as my father and now my father-in-law are both in the hospital. I recently gave a talk at the Grand Boulevard PPP where I spoke about building your child's resilience by helping your child process the angry and sad feelings. Well because of my Dad, I have had to practice this exercise numerous times, and I can already see the benefit in my children's questions and prayers as they continue to process life and death issues.

Talking to parents of young children has sparked my memory about birth order and its link to personality. So to keep thing a bit light –hearted I have copied the birth order features from the work of Adler and Dreikurs.

Alfred Adler introduced the concept of birth order as a way of explaining the differences in human traits and personalities. Today we know that other influences such as environmental factors, the parenting style of our parents. as well as health factors all contribute to forming our personality. The following chart is from the child development site, adapted from Dinkmeyer and McKay.

Birth Order Typical Characteristics

Only Child

- Pampered and spoiled.
- Feels incompetent because adults are more capable.
- Is centre of attention; often enjoys position. May feel special

- Self-centered.
- Relies on service from others rather than own efforts.
- Feels unfairly treated when doesn't get own way.
- May refuse to cooperate.
- Plays "divide and conquer" to get own way.

First Child

- Is only child for period of time; used to being center of attention.
- Believes must gain and hold superiority over other children.
- Being right, controlling often important.
- May respond to birth of second child by feeling unloved and neglected.
- Strives to keep or regain parents' attention through conformity. If this failed, chooses to misbehave.
- May develop competent, responsible behaviour or become very discouraged.
- Sometime strives to protect and help others.
- Strives to please.

Second Child

- Never has parent's undivided attention.
- Always has sibling ahead who's more advanced.
- Acts as if in race, trying to catch up or overtake first child. If first child is "good," second may become "bad". Develops abilities first child doesn't exhibit. If first child successful, may feel uncertain of self and abilities.
- May be a rebel.
- Often doesn't like position.
- Feels "squeezed" if third child is born.
- May push down other siblings.

Middle Child of Three

- Has neither rights of oldest nor privileges of youngest.
- Feels life is unfair.
- Feels unloved, left out, "squeezed."

- Feels doesn't have place in family.
- Becomes discouraged and "problem child" or elevates self by pushing down other siblings
- Is adaptable.
- Learns to deal with both oldest and youngest sibling.

Youngest Child

- Behaves like only child.
- Feels every one bigger and more capable.
- Expects others to do things, make decisions, take responsibility.
- Feels smallest and weakest. May not be taken seriously.
- Becomes boss of family in getting service and own way.
- Develops feelings of inferiority or becomes "speeder" and overtakes older siblings.
- Remains "The Baby." Places other in service.
- If youngest of three, often allies with oldest child against middle child.

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