

Supporting Your Extraverted Child

Does your child:

- Like to be where the action is?
- Enjoy variety and enjoy others sharing their activity?
- Become energized by activities, eager for more?
- Jump in quickly because they are eager to act?

If so, your child may have a preference for extraversion. Introversion and extraversion describe how we gain energy. Those on the extraverted side focus outward to gain energy while those who go inward to become energized are on the introverted side.

Extraverts are energized by the outer world—by activities, people, places and things. Long periods of alone time or time with one other person under-stimulates them. They may feel drained when they are not in contact with people or the outside world.

It is important NOT to confuse extraversion and introversion with the concept of sociability. Extraversion and introversion focus on where we become energized, not our degree of social graciousness.



Parenting a Child Who Prefers Extraversion

Provide a social network beyond the family. Extraverts need people and play. Your extraverted child needs extended family and friends in order to be energized. Energy flows into extraverted children when they are around people. A variety of people add to your extraverted preschooler's experience.

A grandfather described his grandson as an extravert. It was the first day of school. Mom had driven the boy to school the first morning. When they walked into the room and saw all the other children, the boy declared, "This is where I'm going to make my new friends." The boy rode the bus home from school that same day. Mom

went to meet the school bus, but the boy didn't want to get off saying, "I haven't finished talking to everyone yet."

Extraverts think by talking.

Talking lets them sort out their thoughts and feelings. Extraverts think and talk all at one time. Things become clearer as they speak out loud.

Extraverts may talk to themselves out loud. They walk around the house saying, "Where

is my ball?" or "I'm looking for my blanket," as they hunt for these items.

Extraverts want to tell you all about their experiences and ideas immediately. If your child has been someplace, make a conscious effort to hear about your little extravert's day at preschool, day care, playtime, or with grandpa. They need to share their experiences with you. Some may even seem to be non-stop talkers.

Extraverts actively interact with the world. The extraverted child is drawn to interact with the world and may touch things first and think to ask permission later. Extraverts want to experience activities and enjoy telling about these experiences. This can be challenging to a parent and means keeping a close eye on your child. Miram talked about her extraverted daughter who crawled into the towel display at a store, causing the display to topple over. Her daughter screamed when a part hit her head. That brought staff to come to investigate and totally embarrassed the mother. Teach your child to follow rules while in the store. If they use their own judgment, they will touch and explore.

Extraverts may blurt out responses. Your child's preference for extraversion may prompt conflict. If you expect a child to listen before speaking, you may find it annoying when your extraverted child interrupts with questions and comments. Merry said she is more tolerant of her son's interruptions now that she realizes his preference for extraversion.

An Introverted Parent with an Extraverted Child

If you are introverted, your extraverted child may drain you of your energy. Their constant need for activity and involvement

Author: Joan E. LeFebvre, Professor, Department of Family Development, University of Wisconsin-Extension and certified administrator of the Myers Briggs Personality Type Indicator
Reviewer: Elizabeth Murphy, author and consultant about TYPE applications
Layout: Penny Otte, Program Assistant III, Family Living Area Office, Vilas County

may even feel insulting. Try not to take their need for action and relationships beyond the family personally. They are not rejecting you but rather seeking to recharge their energy.

Introverted parents who are raising an extraverted child may feel inadequate and lacking in energy. Tesa relates how she prepares for her daughter's return from preschool. She makes sure dinner is in the oven. Then, she sits down with a cup of tea and has a quiet time to become re-energized before hearing all about her daughter's day.

Extraverted children frequently share the most intimate details of their personal lives with extended family members, friends, and even casual acquaintances. Introverted parents are often taken back by the degree of disclosure by extraverted children. Tell them when some news is for your home only or when some news is to share.



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For more information on Parenting and Child Development, contact: Joan E. LeFebvre, Area Family Living Agent, University of Wisconsin, Extension, 330 Court Street, Courthouse, Eagle River WI 54521-8362, 715-479-3653, FAX 715-479-3605, E-Mail joan.lefebvre@ces.uwex.edu February, 2007