

**Rhythmicity:** Regularity in the timing of physiologic functions, such as hunger, sleep, and elimination

**Approach-withdrawal:** Nature of initial responses to a new stimulus, such as people, situations, places, foods, toys, and procedures (**Approach** responses are positive and are displayed by activity or expression; **withdrawal** responses are negative expressions or behaviors.)

**Adaptability:** Ease or difficulty with which the child adapts or adjusts to new or altered situations

**Threshold of responsiveness (sensory threshold):** Amount of stimulation, such as sounds or light, required to evoke a response in the child

**Intensity of reaction:** Energy level of the child's reactions regardless of quality or direction

**Mood:** Amount of pleasant, happy, friendly behavior compared with unpleasant, unhappy, crying, unfriendly behavior exhibited by the child in various situations

**Distractibility:** Ease with which a child's attention or direction of behavior can be diverted by external stimuli

**Attention span and persistence:** Length of time a child pursues a given activity (**attention**) and the continuation of an activity despite obstacles (**persistence**)

Thirty-five percent of children either have some, but not all, of the characteristics of one of the categories or are inconsistent in their behavioral responses. Many normal children demonstrate this wide range of behavioral patterns.

## **Significance of Temperament**

Observations indicate that children who display the difficult or slow-to-warm-up patterns of behavior are more vulnerable to the development of behavior problems in early and middle childhood. Any child can develop behavior problems if there is dissonance