

## Supporting Your Introverted Child

Does your child:

- Prefer to play alone or with one or two friends?
- Need time alone after being with other people?
- Like to observe before acting when the situation is new?
- Tend to listen and consider before speaking or acting?

If so, your child may have a preference for introversion. 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.

Introverts draw energy from their internal world of ideas, emotions, and impressions. Marti Laney, in her book, [The Introvert Advantage](#), writes that introverts are like a rechargeable battery—they need to stop expending energy and rest in order to recharge. A less stimulating environment restores the energy of an introvert.

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 Introversion

**Introverts need private time.** Build private time into your introverted child's daily

schedule. Private time is being alone or having one or two people around with whom your child feels relaxed. After time at day care or preschool, your child may not want to talk right away. An introvert has a preference for quiet after interacting with others. Be prepared with quiet activities such as a book, music, or simply being "quiet" together.

If your child is getting crabby or withdrawing, help your child know that it's time to take a break. Saying something such as, "It's so noisy and there are so many people in here, let's take a walk outside for a few minutes."



Parents help their introverted children re-energize. Beth doesn't require her daughter to share her activities right away. Instead her daughter goes outside to play with the family dog. Later, after dinner or at bedtime, her daughter shares with her.

Another mother finds that bath time is re-energizing. During a weekend with family company, Jenni noticed her daughter getting crabby. A relaxing bath refreshed her and she was able to play with the other children.

Sometimes a crabby child may object to taking a break. Help your child notice that they feel better after time alone.

**Introverts need time to think before responding.** They may appear cautious or passive. Others may become impatient with them wondering why they don't, "Just spit it out." Introverts may be viewed as stubborn or hiding something because they need time to form what they say. Be patient with your introverted child. Allow time for your child to think before responding.

Kate greatly improved her relationship with her introverted son since understanding the "wait time" introverts need. Now instead of expecting an immediate response or action, this mom makes her request and goes off to do something (waiting). In a short while, the son comes to her with a response or is doing the job she requested.

**Being around people drains an introvert's energy.** Sitting or standing too close to an introvert sucks up their energy. It takes energy for them to be around people even if they are not interacting with them. Help your child find ways to cope.

A long ride in the car close to others taxes an introvert's energy. Tuck a pillow between two children. Stop for breaks where everyone can walk around. Take turns sitting in different seats. Give your child headphones to listen to music or a story. Help your introverted child learn how to let others know they need space to be comfortable by saying, "Could you move over just a bit, thank you." Or "I feel scrunched. Please move over."

Introverted children are apt to be happy spending their time playing alone, even at an early age. Their idea of a special birthday party might be to invite just one friend. One mother revealed that she had a birthday party for her introverted daughter where she invited too many people. The result was that her daughter ended up

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crying alone in her room while the party actively went on without her.

### **An Extraverted Parent with an Introverted Child**

Extraverted parents often question what is wrong with an introverted child. The extraverted parent may wonder if the introverted child is depressed or suffering from a physical illness and try to add social activities to the schedule. But, planning too much activity for an introverted child may over-stimulate the child. It's important not to overwhelm an introverted child. Try doing a quiet activity together to build your relationship. Read a book together, go fishing, or take a walk.



Introverted children may be uncomfortable with the amount of disclosure from an extraverted parent. Before sharing personal information or stories about your child, check with your child to see if they are comfortable having family or friends know.

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