

BIRTH ORDER

A child's place in the family can't explain everything about him; however, it can provide valuable insight to who he is and the relationship the two of you can have. Birth order does affect a child but it does not automatically shape personality. Birth order, along with heredity, family size, the spacing and sex of siblings, education and upbringing, provides clues about our children and helps us understand who they are.

We can place too much emphasis on the analysis of the birth order of our children. We may be tempted to stereotype them solely on the basis of their position in the family. Our goal is not to make every child feel like an only child, but rather, to make them feel loved for who they are!

Each position in the family has its advantages and disadvantages. We must use this information to build on our children's strengths.

THE FIRST CHILD OR FIRSTBORN

This can refer to the first child of the family or the first male or female child.
Firstborn children have a tendency to become leaders as he becomes the leader of his siblings.
Firstborn children may be driven to succeed in their given fields.
These children have a tendency to be organized, bossy and a stickler for following rules.
Often these children are conscientious and well-organized.
They may be high achievers and have the desire to please others.
The first child takes pride in her accomplishment and develops a deep sense of self worth.
(Jaipi Sixbear 2008)

Parental Response to the Firstborn

Encourage your firstborn's development without demanding perfection. Everyone makes mistakes!
Teach him to take smaller bites of life and work at saying "NO."
Encourage his sense of humor and help him enjoy life.



Photo by Howard G. Buffett

THE MIDDLE CHILD

It is difficult for the middle child to "carve out his niche" or define his particular role in the family.

Friends become very important to middle children. They develop friendship skills and learn to be good "team players."

Middle children often learn to negotiate, compromise and give and take. They can become effective managers and leaders because they are good listeners and can cope with varying points of view.

The middle child is the hardest to describe because of the various influences surrounding him.

Self-esteem of middle children may be lower because they are competing with both younger and older siblings and feel they can not measure up.

Middle children are most likely to become whatever their older siblings are NOT to avoid competing.

Parental Response to Middle Children

Help your middle child develop self-esteem by recognizing her talents and individuality. Make an effort to give your middle child a little extra attention so that she doesn't have to fight for it within the family.
Support friendships and group activities. Encourage developing the "whole child" in each one of your children rather than labeling them "the jock " and "the brain."

THE LAST-BORN CHILD

The baby of the family is often given an extra dose of affection and attention.

Family rules often are relaxed with the last-born and he "gets away with murder."

These children are usually fun-loving, affectionate and persuasive.

The last-born child grows up being coddled one minute and compared unfavorably with an older sibling the next. As a result of this, he can be extremely self-confident in some ways and insecure in others.

Parental Response to Last-Born Child

Allow "the baby" to grow-up at the appropriate time.

Teach him to accept age-appropriate responsibilities.

Avoid doing his chores simply because it's easier on you.

Make an effort to give consistent attention to your last-born.