DETERMINING YOUR CHILD'S TEMPERAMENT

Melancholic	**Sanguine**	**Choleric**	**Phlegmatic**
AUTUMN	SPRING	SUMMER	WINTER
color: mauve element: earth	color: yellow element: air	color: red element: fire	color: blue element: water
balanced – considerate, understanding	balanced – socially aware, caring	balanced – selfless, leader	balanced – reliable, faithful
unbalanced – self-pitying	unbalanced – superficial	unbalanced – destructive, dictator	unbalanced – lazy

Temperament is really predominant between the ages of 5 and 14. It is crucial during the elementary years to be aware of both your child's temperament and the recommended parenting and teaching strategies to help your child develop in a balanced fashion. We do not strive to change the child, only to understand him and to nurture his inborn tendencies in a way that they will become assets and strengths. For example a melancholic child, if not taught to come out of himself from an early age, will sink deeper and deeper into watching the outside world from deep within himself, uninterested in social activities and mulling over the meaning of life. This tendency will then lead toward an excessively egocentric and self-pitying adult. On the other hand, developing the melancholic's interest in research and analysis leads to a child who can work on problems with great depth and absorbtion and not lose focus.

Form Drawing is the first subject where the Waldorf method asks you to determine your child's temperament and then gives recommended forms to help your child reach inner balance. The following is a series of brief notes on a chapter entitled "The Role of Temperament in Understanding the Child" by Rene Querido, found in Waldorf Education: A family guide. Please refer to that text for further information. These notes are mainly concerned with how to recognize someone of each type and they detail mainly the results of letting the temperament predominate to an excessive extent. Please do not become alarmed that your child is on an irrevocable path toward a slew of undesirable traits! The afore-mentioned article contains a lot of practical information on enobling each temperament and helping your child to find balance. It is a most valuable resource.

Note that all young children are naturally sanguine; that is, until the age of five you are certain to feel that sanguine best describes your child. Childhood is naturally a state of joy and excitement, curiousity, enthusiasm, sociability, and being caught up in the here and now. As the "I" begins to develop further, you may begin to notice that one of the following describes your child:

THE FOUR TEMPERAMENTS

Melancholic

- grows tall quickly

- shuffles, walks with head bent

- feet and hands seem far away

- thinks about the meaning of life, broods

- likes to be a spectator

- asks awkward questions of adults

- becomes disillusioned with teachers

- interested in grammar, meaning, structure, knowing why

- concerned with **past**, with remembering

- holds grudges

- *prone to being egocentric*

Sanguine

- light-hearted

- fleet-footed

- smiling, delightful

- learns quickly

- tremendously enthusiastic

- feet hardly touch the ground

- charming

- concerned with the here and now

- changes mood quickly

- more concerned with influences around him than his own mood

- concerned with **present outside themselves**

- sociable

- *prone to being superficial*

Choleric

- races through the door shouting, "I'm home!"

- needs a huge garden, trees to climb, things to build

- concerned with **future**

- barrels through things

- stocky build

- trememdous warmth

- it's obvious when they're stormy, obvious when they're excited

- can be very negative, destructive temper, looking for a fight

- *prone to being destructive*

Phlegmatic

- comfort-loving

- loves repitition

- placid, great evenness of being

- faithful, loyal

- hard to move

- still waters run deep

- can become obstinate when pushed

- practical

- concerned with **present inside themselves**

- loves to feel content and warm

- *prone to being lazy*